

DUBLIN GRAND OPERA SOCIETY

25th Anniversary 1941 - 1966



FESTIVAL OF
ITALIAN OPERA

SPRING 1966

GAIETY THEATRE DUBLIN

The Editor thanks the Authority of the Opera House, San Carlo for so kindly presenting the enclosed article and photographs.



“Il Concerto” (the concert) by Lionello Spada (Bologna 1576—1622) Spada came of very modest origin and when very young served as a model at the Accademia dei Carracci and during Lent used to ring the bells of the church of San Martino Maggiore for food.

He studied painting with great fervour and frequented the studio of Caravaggio and with him went to Naples and Malta.

He returned to the city of his birth and started to rival with Carracci, Guido Reni and Tiarini. He became the court painter of Duca Ranuccio Farnese and during this period painted frescos in the Oratory of SS Trinata at Pieve di Cento and in the church of Madonna della Ghiara at Reggio Emilia and in the theatre Farnese of Parma.

Edited by

DON FERDINANDO D'ARDIA CARACCILO DEI PRINCIPI DI CURSI



*Warmest congratulations to the Dublin Grand Opera Society
on their Silver Jubilee. What they have done for
Grand Opera in Dublin in the last twenty-five years is
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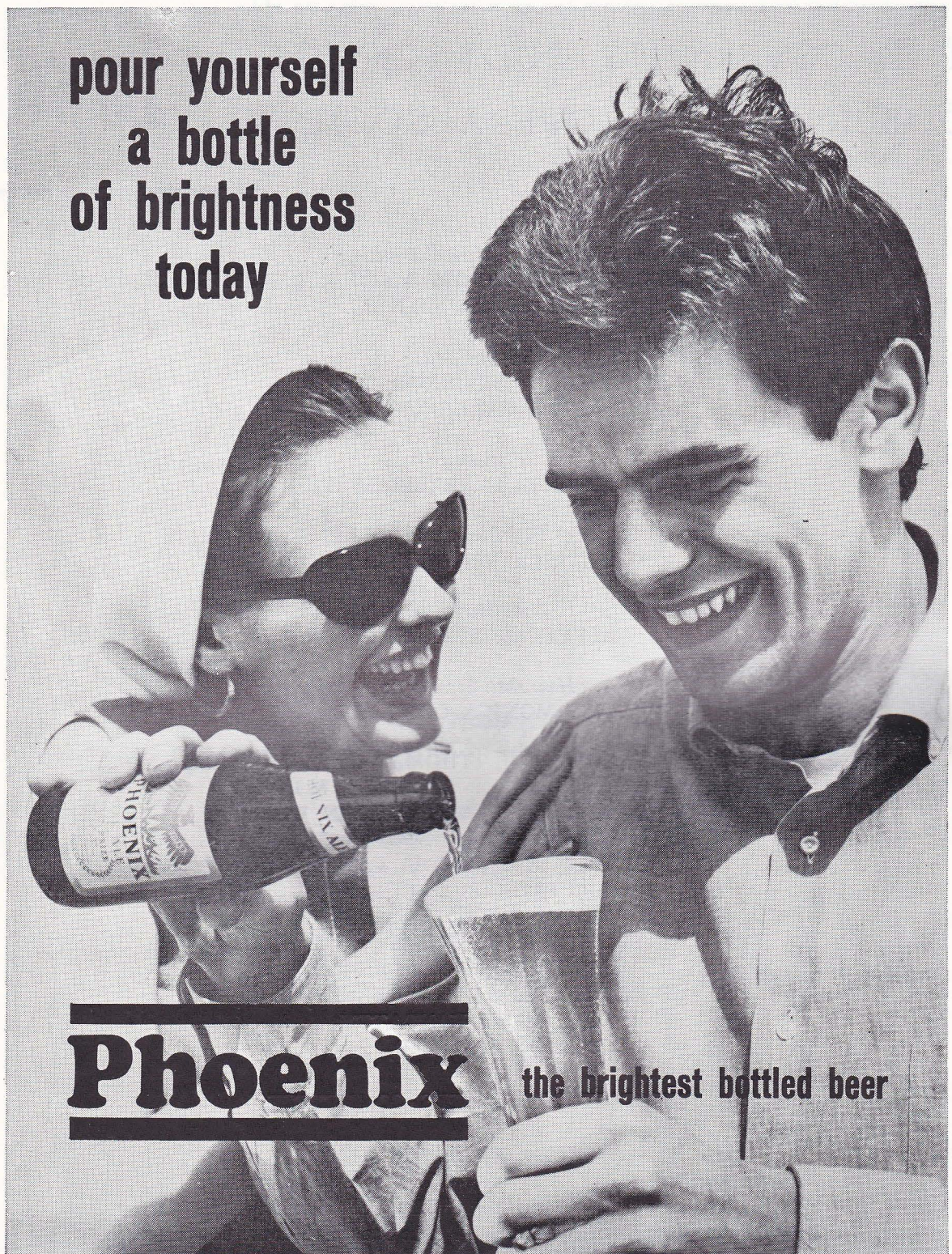
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Message to Opera Lovers

from

Professor Commendatore John F. Larchet



During this year, the Dublin Grand Opera Society will not only give its fiftieth season but will also celebrate its twenty-fifth birthday. Looking back through these years and considering what has been achieved, one feels a sense of gratitude as well as satisfaction. For instance, out of a repertoire of more than sixty operas, many of these were heard in Ireland for the first time. Among these were Verdi's *Habuccho*, *Macbeth* and *Falstaff*; Puccini's *Suor Angelica* and *Turandot*; *The Bartered Bride* (Smetana), *Andrea Chenier* (Giordano), *Der Rosenkavalier* (Richard, Strauss), *Pelleas et Melisande* (Debussy). The three performances of Debussy's beautiful opera were given by a complete French cast and conductor from l'Opera-Comique, Paris. Dublin also enjoyed two seasons of Mozart and Rossini, performed by the Hamburg State Opera Company, which included soloists, conductors, stage hands and even scenery; the world-famous Dr. Rennert was the producer and he came to Dublin for both seasons.

These French and German performances represent the pinnacle reached during our earlier years and they set a standard for us to try to follow and maintain. In the years approaching the present time, we can recall many performances of a very high order during our Italian Festival seasons, when a generous subsidy from the Italian Government enabled us to engage first class artistes. It can truthfully be said that, over the years, we have introduced to this country a very

large number of singers, some of whom were already famous, and others who have since become renowned. We have also given opportunities to Irish singers to gain experience in this difficult branch of musical art.

The progress that has been made from the artistic standpoint, has been due in a large measure to two essential factors, a fine theatre and a fine orchestra. From the outset of our career, the late Mr. Louis Elliman owner of the Gaiety Theatre helped us financially, and in many ways encouraged us during the formative years. On behalf of the D.G.O.S., I take this opportunity to place on record a special tribute to his memory and to express our sincere sympathy with his widow, brothers and relatives and the many who mourn his untimely passing.

For having the services of such a fine orchestra we are grateful to the Radio Eireann authorities for their invaluable co-operation at all times.

Our thanks are also due to the ever-faithful and hard working chorus, who have given so much of their time and talents to the D.G.O.S. They have learnt not only a wide musical repertoire, but also a linguistic one, having sung in Italian and German as well as in English.

Last, but decidedly not least, our gratitude is due to our generous guarantors and patrons and to all those supporters of our efforts, without whose help we would never have survived.

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And the bloom on the Dublin Grand Opera Society becomes more lustrous
every year. So here's a toast from Guinness. To the Dublin Grand Opera
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GUINNESS



The above illustration represents some examples of early Irish art and craftsmanship. It includes :—A portrait of St. Mark or St. Luke from the “Book of Kells.” Examples of pre-historic glass beads. Crozier of Cormac MacCarthy, King Bishop of Cashel. Encaustic pavement tile. An example of bookbinding Dublin 1779. One of the enamelled bosses of the Ardagh Chalice. Portion of the frontispiece of the “Epistle of Jerome” from the “Book of Durrow.” Sculpture on the Round Tower at Devenish Island, Lough Erne. Three examples of enamelling bosses “Shrine of St. Patrick’s Bell,” “Moylough Belt,” “Tara Brooch,” and an enamelled button of the early Christian period.

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OUR SOCIETY

BY

LIEUT.-COL. CAV.-UFF. WILLIAM O'KELLY

CHAIRMAN



This year the Dublin Grand Opera Society celebrates its Silver Jubilee. For a quarter of a century the officers and members have presented two seasons of opera every year. It seems a long time since that meeting in 1941 in the Central Hotel, Exchequer Street, when the decision was taken by a number of Dublin's music lovers to found the Society to produce regular opera seasons in this capital city, once a renowned musical centre enjoying celebrated opera seasons. Some of the greatest personalities in European opera were regular visitors to the Dublin seasons. During these halcyon years two seasons were presented every year and one year witnessed as many as four seasons of opera, equal in musical quality to the best in Europe.

The founders of the Dublin Grand Opera Society were well aware of this cultural heritage of their city. Their purpose in undertaking to produce opera was to commit themselves to seek the very highest artistic standards in their presentations. Immediately they got down to work and in four months three Italian operas, *La Traviata*, *La Boheme*, and *Il Trovatore* were drawing full houses at the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin. Musical circles in Dublin were struck by the merit of these productions. It was felt that this initial season was a significant beginning.

Soon after this success came an invitation from Limerick requesting the Society to bring opera to that city; after Limerick a call came from Cork and in each of these southern cities the Society had the same acclaim as in the capital. For a few years Limerick and Cork were played regularly. The rising cost

of transport and accommodation made it impossible to bring and maintain our unpaid chorus in these cities, and we were compelled to abandon this attractive project.

Our seasons became a welcome part of the Dublin scene. No longer were we spoken of as The Dublin Grand Opera Society; we became known to our patrons familiarly as "The D.G.O.S."

In 1946 we went, on invitation, to the Hippodrome, Belfast—again a noteworthy success.

In that year, 1946, the second world war ended and the difficulty and hazards which had attended sea travel were, happily, over. This, of course, made it possible for professional companies to come to Dublin and the Society could easily have lost the initiative in providing first class opera for Dublin. It became imperative that we seek to improve artistic standards. This posed a financial challenge. More money had to be found if we were to bring in renowned artists from outside the country. The officers of the Society proposed making an appeal to music lovers in Dublin to become patrons of the Society. The response was immediate and encouraging.

Our patrons paid a fixed subscription for which they were given certain considerations, one being a number of free seats during each season. This insured to the Society the revenue from a good proportion of the higher priced seats every season, and this in turn brought two important benefits; it was relatively safe to add to our repertoire operas new to our audience



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who do not usually take to unfamiliar operas immediately ; it made it possible also to bring artists from Britain and the Continent to sing in Dublin.

The Society's officers constantly kept before them their original purpose of restoring Dublin to the eminence it once had on the European musical scene. They entered into negotiations with the executives of Radio Eireann and it was agreed that, in future, productions of the Society should have the invaluable advantage of the service of the Radio Eireann Symphony Orchestra.

Progress accelerated when war time conditions gave way to normal life in England and on the Continent. First we introduced new singers from England, a little later we brought singers from the Continent to sing particular roles. The response of our audiences was most encouraging. The excitement around the box office in South King Street mounted, and the air of expectancy could be sensed in the auditorium as our patrons awaited the appearance of new continental stars. The obvious satisfaction, apparent in the reception accorded our new artists, showed us that we were undoubtedly on the right road.

Dutch and German, French and Italian names began to appear on our programmes. Audience reaction and comment showed even more exhilaration. Stars who came here were quasi-ambassadors for us in their own countries and the name of Dublin was heard again in important operatic centres : The Dublin Grand Opera Society had notices in foreign journals. Principals from the Paris Opera, including the conductor, came to perform the French work, *Pelleas and Melisande*. Then came the Hamburg State Opera and the Munich State Opera to present German Opera under the auspices of the Society and with the Society's chorus. Some of the world's leading operatic stars came with these visiting companies.

The Italian Embassy in Ireland became interested and, on their advice, officers of the Society went to Italy, the capital—the very home—of opera to explore the possibility of an Italian Season of Italian Opera. We were fortunate in meeting in Italy a highly reputed *impresario*, a man, who is now, sixteen years later, as well known in Dublin as in Rome, our good friend, Il Maestro Cardenio Botti. His part as our liaison with the Italian Government and with the Italian singers would need a special article to do it justice.

Before I go on to recount the further development of the Dublin Grand Opera Society there is a point I think pertinent here. When we undertook to produce opera in Dublin we did so without seeking financial aid from the State or from any other source and we succeeded in presenting opera of an increasingly high

artistic standard with the funds collected from the productions and with the loyal support of our patron members. This, of course, would not be possible unless the management of the Society and our performing members gave their time and talents without any monetary return whatever.

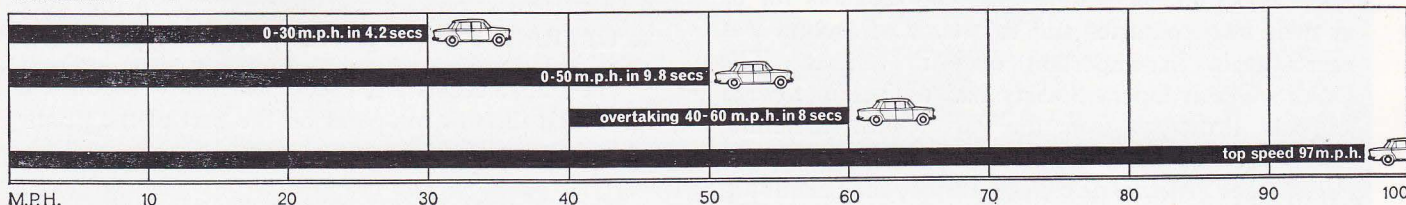
I cannot find adequate words to express the advantage it was to us in the furthering of our cultural aims to receive subventions from the governments in Italy, Germany and France. They enabled us to call on the greatest singers in their countries for our annual seasons. Without these concessions it would have been utterly impossible for our Society to engage the premier singers of these countries.

The Italian Government, especially, has generously acceded to our request for a subvention for the past sixteen years. More than one hundred Italian operatic personnel, amongst them many of the greatest artists and artistes of this particularly Italian art-form have sung in conducted or produced Italian works in our seasons during the last fifteen years and our people have applauded their singing and music with full hearts. More than any other visitors, Dublin has taken these Italians to itself ; between them and us there is a warm understanding—what they would call *simpatia*—which endears them to us in a charming way. The Italians, when they come, enhance our social scene with an artistic pleasantness. But most of all they give us OPERA in a way it especially appeals to us.

The Italian artists are, I feel, principally responsible for a vital interest in operas on the part of the public and of many of our young singers.

Many of these singers have taken part, with credit, side by side with renowned Italian artists and artistes ; they have gained eminently useful, operatic experience that has helped them whenever they graced other stages at home or abroad. One cherished purpose of the Society has been to foster the careers of young Irish singers and we regard it as one of our most satisfying achievements that most of Dublin's leading young singers have appeared in our productions.

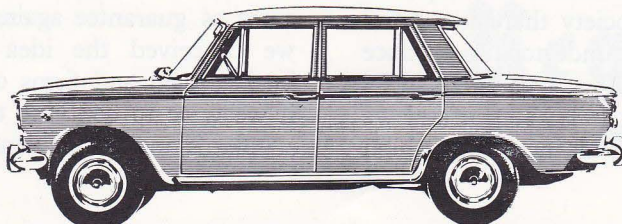
No one needs to be told that production costs of opera have risen with the general pattern of the economy and we had, at last, to have recourse to our own government for assistance in meeting our increased commitments. We gratefully acknowledge that, through its statutory constituted bodies, Bord Failte and Comhairle Ealaion, we were allotted limited sums as guarantee against losses. At the same time, we conceived the idea of putting before Dublin businessmen and firms our urgent need for backing if we were to continue to maintain our high artistic standards and not be constrained to increase the price



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of our seats beyond the reach of many of our faithful followers for whom opera meant a few weeks of exhilarating joy every year. After a slow start the response became quite gratifying and we are sanguine that more and more guarantors will enlist with us as the need arises. We have every confidence, too, that our Government are behind our cultural venture for our citizens and will provide any small subsidies we may from time to time request.

As we look back on twenty-five years of presenting grand opera in Dublin we take pride in the fact that we have done what we proposed in 1941; we have restored to Dublin a place in the sun as one of the great musical metropolises, of the civilised world. It is significant that a party of the élite patrons of Metropolitan Opera House, New York, led by that great personality of "The Met" Mrs. John De Witt Peltz have chosen to come to our present season in Dublin as their very first call on a tour of the great opera capitals of Europe.

During these twenty-five years our greatest debt is due to our performing members, who bore the lion's share of the labour undertaken to stage high class opera. They received most of the knocks from critics and coaches but their good-hearted bouyancy kept all our spirits afloat during periods of rough weather. One realises best their achievements when one remembers that the Society has presented almost sixty different operas, and they that were called upon to sing in four different languages. After their day's work they came to rehearsal and to performance without thought of financial reward. Dublin owes them much.

Our annual season now attracts some 50,000 people, who come from every social sphere in our community. As time passes more and more young people occupy our seats and this we regard a healthy symptom. Our immediate plans envisage further work for our youth. We intend to have a number of performances for schools to offer our growing boys and girls the opportunity of acquiring a taste for, and knowledge of, this part of the world's great, classical, musical creations.

When other new projects are proposed we can rely on the help of our understanding friends. Drawn to co-operate in the work of the Society during the twenty-five years have been enlightened, estimable bodies. Our own Government has given us financial backing as have the Cultural Departments of other Governments. Our State orchestra has joined with us in our productions to the Radio Eireann authority, the Director General and Music Director we offer our thanks. Our businessmen have become our esteemed patrons and guarantors. Hundreds of our young people have sung in our choruses and thousands of our ordinary fellow citizens have made up our delighted audiences. Our Society is, indeed, sensible of the confidence placed in them by so many of our people. We tender them our profound thanks.

In this immense climate of active, proven goodwill can we not face the future with assurance?

William O'Kelly.

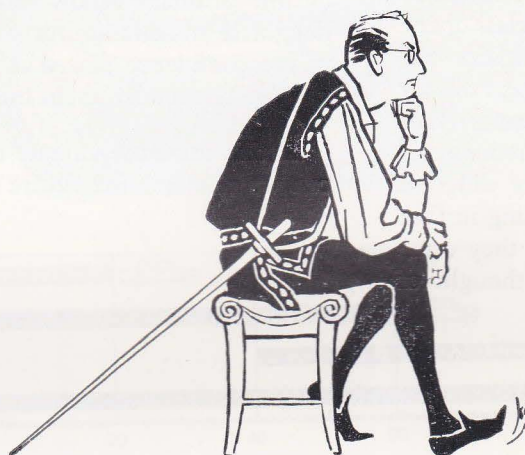
The late Albert E. Timlin

Just as this Brochure was about to go to press news was received of the death, after a long illness, of Mr. Albert E. Timlin, Honorary Secretary of the Dublin Grand Opera Society.

Time permits us to say no more here than that Bertie Timlin was a founder member of the society and a member of the Management Committee since its commencement. These were 25 years of devoted and untiring service to the society and to the promotion of opera in Dublin. Both owe him much and will be the poorer for his passing. His fellow members mourn him and offer their deeply-felt sympathy to his bereaved family.

THE EDITOR

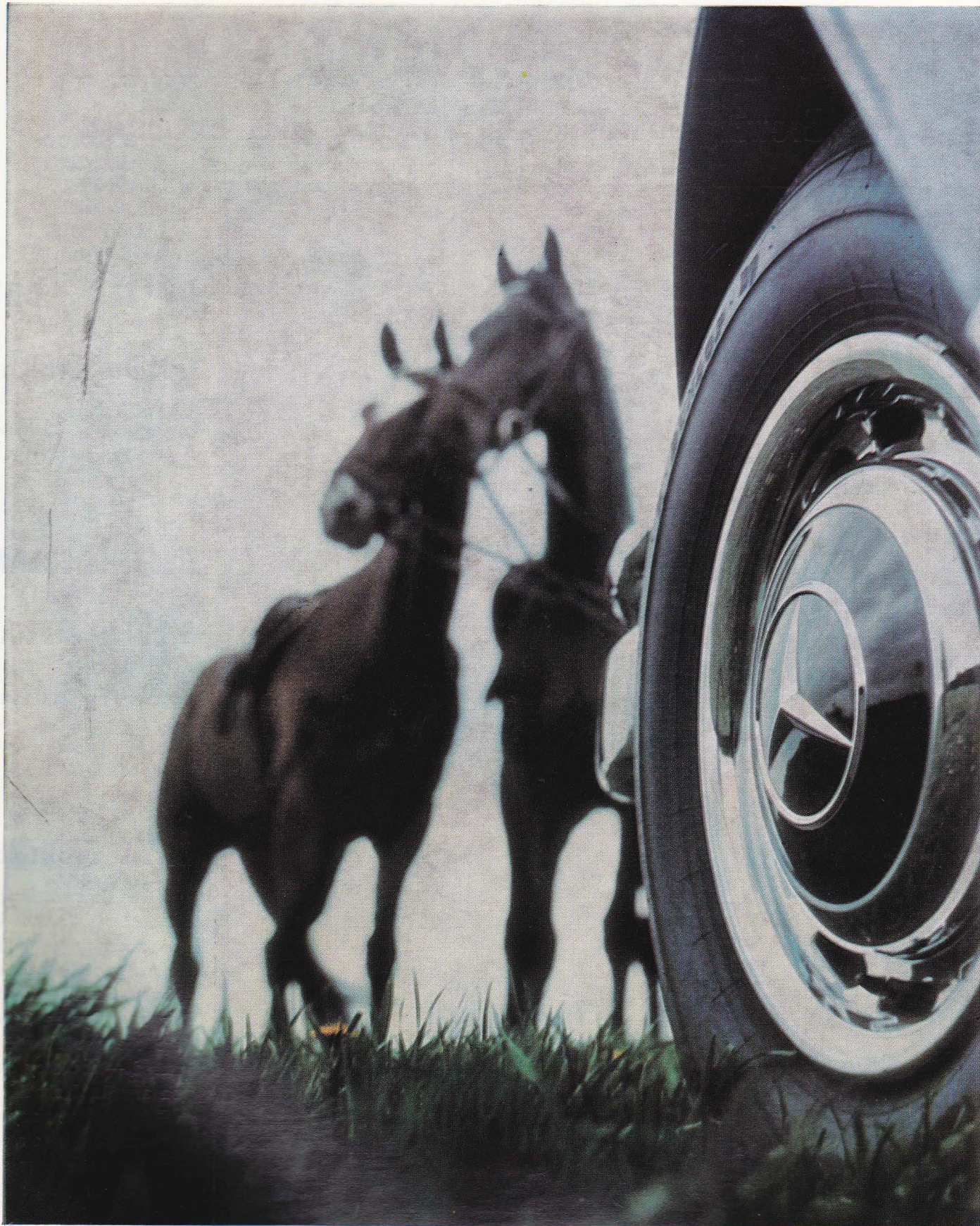
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NAPOLEONE ANNOVAZZI

GIUSEPPE MORELLI

ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR :

VALENTINO BARCELLESI

PRODUCER :

AUGUSTO CARDI

ASSISTANT PRODUCER :

PATRICK MacCELLAN

CHORUS MASTERS :

MAESTRO RICCARDO BOTTINO

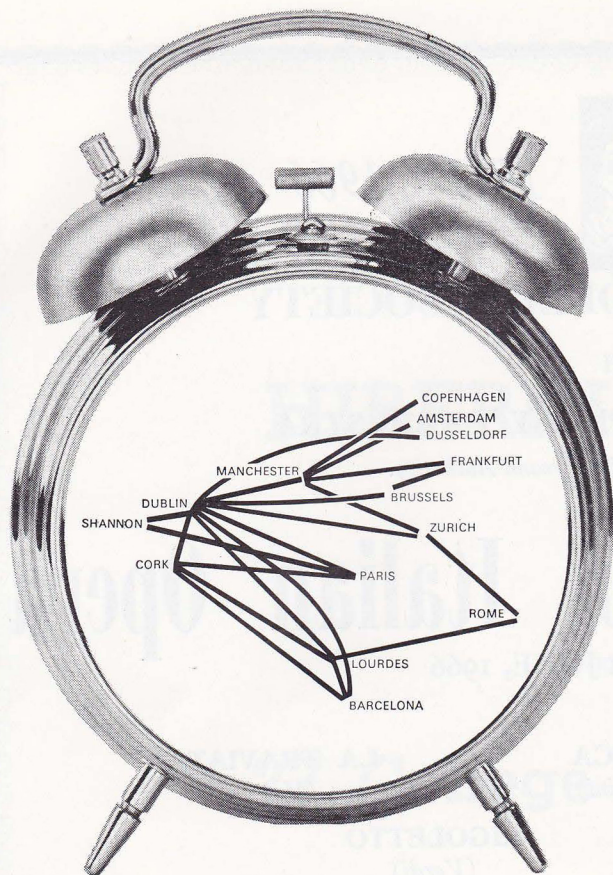
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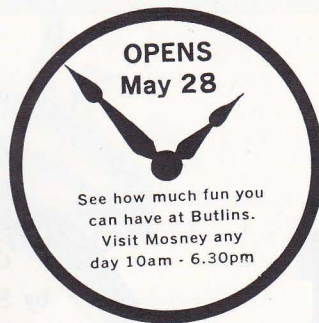
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Conductors and Assistant Conductors

NAPOLEONE ANNOVAZZI

(Conductor). Though born a Florentine completed his musical studies at Venice and began his conducting career at Riga in 1935. Combining work in the fields of symphonic and opera music, he has conducted the Santa Cecilia, Vienna Symphony and Munich Philharmonic Orchestras and the orchestras of Lisbon and Madrid, and in the field of opera, at the State Operas of Vienna, Cologne, Wiesbaden, Munich and in Lisbon, Barcelona, Naples, Rome as well as at Caracalla. In America he has directed opera at Havana, Mexico and the City Centre, New York. This is his seventh visit to Dublin. Maestro Annovazzi's conducting of *Der Rosenkavalier* and *The Pearl Fishers* at the 1964 Winter Season showed him to be equally distinguished in the German and French repertoires as in his native Italian.



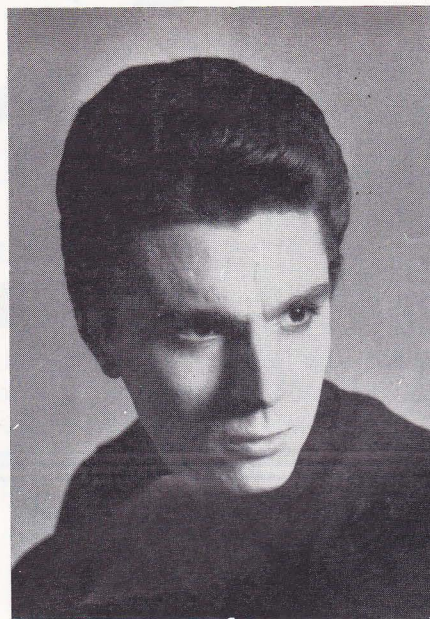
VALENTINO BARCELLESI

(Assistant Conductor). Maestro Barcellesi comes to Dublin for the first time as Assistant Conductor for the Italian Opera Festival. He has acted in the same capacity and as a conductor in his own right extensively in the Italian opera theatres and in the concert field.



GIUSEPPE MORELLI

(Conductor). Born in Rome in 1907, he commenced his musical education in the Schola Cantorum of St. Salvatore in Lauro. He studied at the Conservatoire of St. Cecilia under Maestri Bustini, Setaccioli, Dobici and Palombi, taking his degree in Composition. He also followed the "perfection course" for conductors at the National Academy of St. Cecilia, under the direction of Bernadino Molinari. He has conducted in many theatres in Italy including the Rome Opera, Caracalla and the San Carlo of Naples, as well as orchestral concerts with Rome's principal orchestra, the Santa Cecilia. Outside Italy Maestro Morelli is well known in nearly all the European countries, fulfilling frequent engagements at the State Operas of Berlin and Stuttgart, the National Opera of Brussels, in Spain, Austria, France, Rumania etc. In the Far East he has directed the Italian Seasons at Tokyo and Osaka. For the 1965 Italian Opera Season at Helsinki Maestro Morelli was appointed principal conductor.



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AUGUSTO CARDI

(Producer). After serving his apprenticeship as assistant to great producers of opera like Sanine, Forzano and Wallenstein, Augusto Cardi became a producer in his own right at some of the most famous opera houses in Italy and abroad — eighteen seasons at the Fenice of Venice, eleven at Barcelona, and frequent assignments at the Arena of Verona, Parma, Palermo, Trieste, Paris, and in the theatres of Germany, Switzerland and Holland. This is his second season in Dublin.

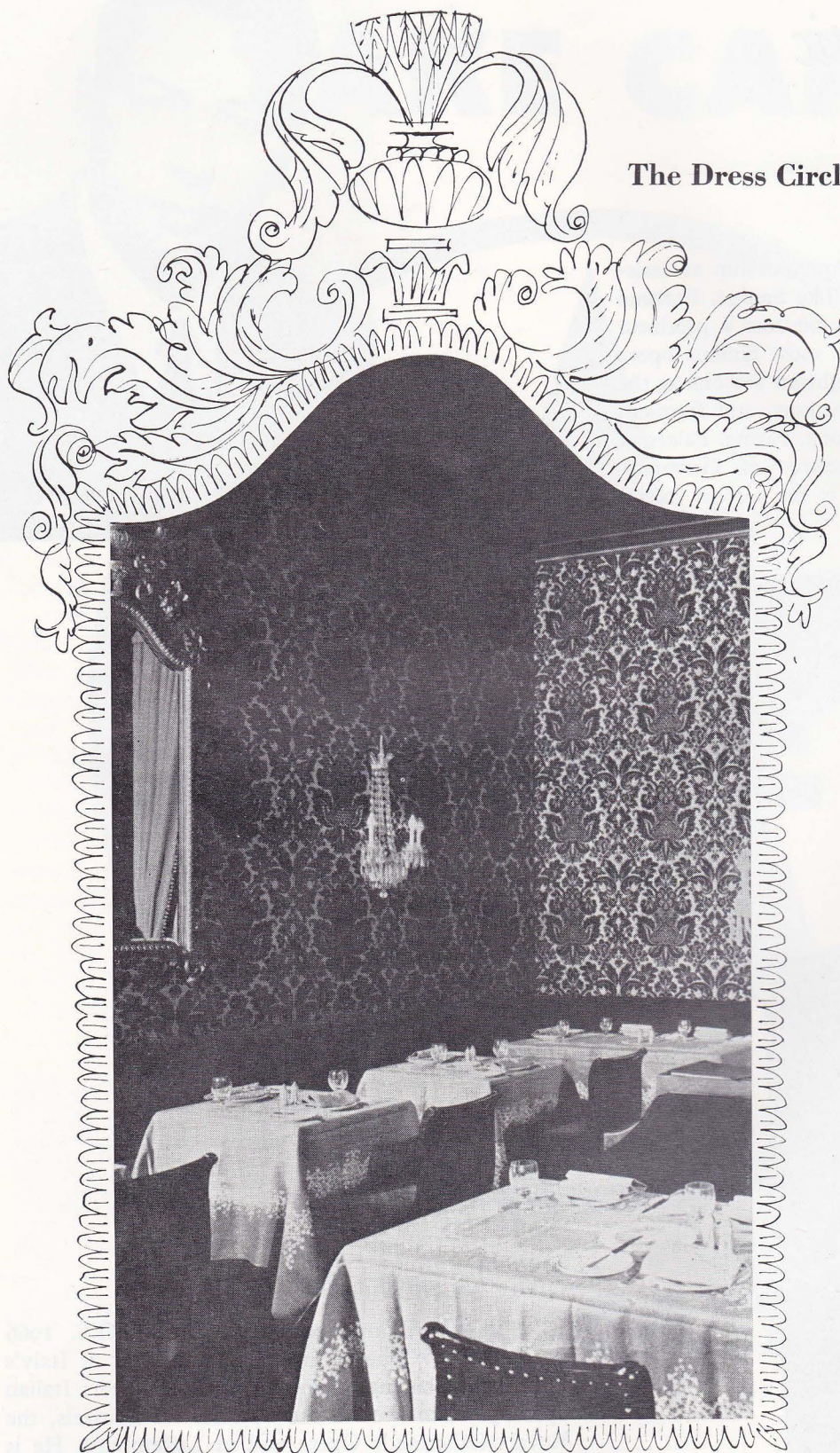


Director

GINO MENELAO

Is the Italian impresario for the D.G.O.S. 1966 Festival. He is one of the more prominent of Italy's impresarios, having organised for several years Italian opera performances at the Monnaie of Brussels, the Royal Netherlands Opera and in Luxemburg. He is also artistic director of the Teatro Grande of Brescia (See feature on page 39).

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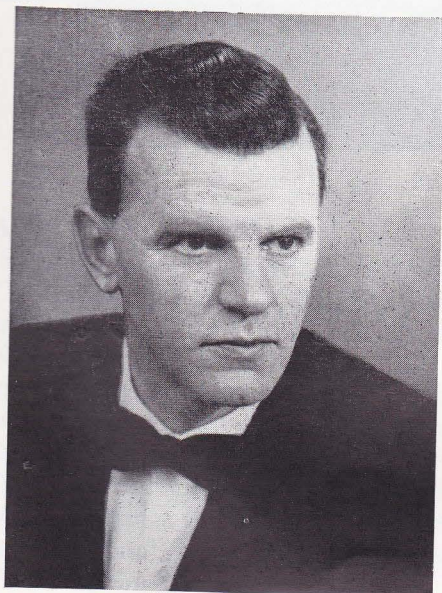
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LIDO NISTRI

(Chorusmaster), graduated at the Conservatorio "L. Boccherini" of Lucca before initiating a successful career as conductor and chorusmaster at the more important opera seasons in Italy and outside it. He has worked at the Massimo of Palermo, the Carlo Felice of Genoa and the theatres of Bologna, Turin, Catania, Parma and Brescia and abroad in such noted opera houses as Paris, Berlin, Geneva, Lisbon, etc.



PATRICK SOMMERVILLE

Is a Dublin School Teacher. His leisure time is devoted to music and he has vast experience in dealing with Choral Groups in Dublin. He joined the music staff of the D.G.O.S. in 1962 and the high standard achieved by the chorus this season is due in no small way to his hard work.

Thirty-Three



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Thirty-Four

MARISA BALDAZZI

(Soprano). Like so many other prominent singers won the Spoleto Contest and made her début in 1961 at Spoleto in *Il Trovatore* an opera which she has already sung in many important Italian opera centres. She has recently undertaken a long tour of the principal theatres of Central America and has had engagements at the State Operas of Frankfurt and Munich. Has also given concerts on the Italian Radio and Television.



VALERIA ESCALAR

(Mezzo-soprano) commenced her operatic career in 1957 after winning an Italian Radio and T.V. Contest. She appeared in Dublin the following year after a successful début at the San Carlo of Naples. Soon afterwards she retired from the theatre on marriage but recently returned to the stage to resume her singing of Mezzo roles in many of Italy's opera houses.

ANNA MACCIANTI

(Soprano), after winning the Spoleto Contest and the "New Voices" Competition sponsored by La Scala, was admitted to the Scala's two-year finishing course (Corso di Perfezionamento). She has made extensive tours in South Africa, England, Spain and Belgium and sung at the Comunale Theatre of Florence and the San Carlo of Naples. At the latter she was the Gilda in this year's production of *Rigoletto*. Anna Maccianti sings the part of Norina (with Ugo Benelli as Nemorino) in the recently released Deutsche Grammophon recording of Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*.





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LUISA MARAGLIANO

(Soprano) was born and studied in Genoa. After her début in Switzerland as Mimi her extraordinary qualities as a "Verdi Soprano" soon developed. In the few brilliant years of this soprano's career she has appeared in many of the world's greatest opera houses — to mention but a few, the Scala, Covent Garden, the State Operas of Berlin and Dresden, at the Arena at Verona as well as in the theatres of Bologna, Parma, Rome, Genoa, Naples, Turin and Catania. This will be her fifth visit to Dublin.



VALERIA MARCIONDA

(Soprano) was born in Tuscany and received her musical training in Florence. She sang once previously in Dublin as Musetta in the 1962 Festival. In the interval her career has made great strides and she returns as Norina in *Don Pasquale* after a busy season in Italy which included singing coloratura roles at the Scala, the Massimo of Palermo (Rossini's *Scala di Seta*), the Verdi Theatre of Trieste (Donizetti's *Elisir d'Amore*) and in the Italian Radio broadcast of *La Sonnambula* opposite Ugo Benelli.

CARMEL O'BYRNE

(Soprano) comes from Tramore, Co. Waterford, spent several years in Italy, specializing in Italian music of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. In Rome she studied with Maestro Manfredo Polverosi and later with Maestro Omero Di Marzo. In March 1965, as a result of winning an International Singing Competition promoted by the Opera House in Palermo, she joined the "Centro Avviamento al Teatro Lirico" in the Teatro Massimo, Palermo and took part in the performances in the Teatro Massimo, given by the "Centro".

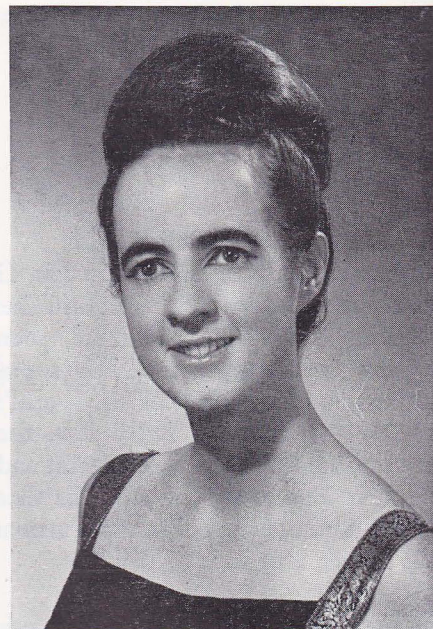
She made her Irish début under the auspices of the Music Association of Ireland in Dublin in October 1962 and her English début in Manchester in October 1963. She has given recitals in many places in Ireland and has been heard on the Radio both in chamber music recitals and operatic concerts. First appearance with the Dublin Grand Opera Society.



ANNA MARIA ROTA

(Mezzo-Soprano). This distinguished artist is making her first appearance in Dublin. She appears regularly in the annual seasons of the great Italian Opera houses including the Scala, the Teatro dell' Opera, Rome, and the San Carlo of Naples. She has been heard also abroad frequently from Paris, Lisbon and Madrid to London, Edinburgh, Glyndebourne and Chicago, in both opera and concert. She has recorded complete operas for Deutsche Grammophon and for R.C.A. Victor.

Thirty-Eight



MARGHERITA RINALDI

(Soprano). Studied in Milan and perfected her style at the school of the famous teacher Ines Adami Corradetti. Was discovered at the Spoleto competition in 1958 where she won first prize. In the Teatro Sperimentale there, which is under the same direction as the Opera of Rome, she made her début in *Lucia de Lammermoor*. She was immediately called to the Scala. In the past few years Rinaldi has become a favourite interpreter of coloratura roles in all of Italy's major opera houses. She sang the role of Gilda in this year's production of *Rigoletto* at the Scala.



THE TEATRO SAN CARLO OF NAPLES

Previous brochures featured the *Regio* of Parma, the *Communale* of Regio Emilia, the *Fenice* of Venice, the *Massimo Bellini* of Catonica, the *Teatro Communale* of Bologna, and the *Teatro Grande* of Brescia.

On November 4, 1962 the San Carlo Theatre completed its 225th year of life—not an inconsiderable age for a theatre which, having survived revolutions, riots, wars, and political upheavals as well as constant changes in artistic taste, still bears illustrious testimony to the centuries-old glory of Naples and its flourishing musical life.

Commissioned by the Bourbon Charles III, King of Naples, to replace the demolished San Bartolomeo Theatre which for more than a century and a half had been the principal Neapolitan theatre, the San Carlo opened on the evening of 4 November 1737, the Saint's day of the sovereign who gave it its name. Built to designs by Giovanni Medrano, a brigadier in the Royal Army, the work was completed in little more than eight months—quite a record for those times—by the contractor Angelo Carasale who became the theatre's first impresario. He later came to an unfortunate end—so we are told by the Neapolitan patriot and historian, Pietro Colletta—for when asked to produce the accounts of the 100,000 ducats spent on the construction of the San Carlo, he failed to satisfy the Bourbon auditor's curiosity and was



Front Entrance by the Architect Niccolini

imprisoned in the San Elmo fortress where he died after a year.

The San Carlo has since undergone many changes of both its interior and exterior. It was first altered in 1768 by Cavalier Ferdinando Fuga, then again in 1797 by the architect and chief scene-designer Domenico Chelli. The damage caused by gunfire during the 1799 risings was immediately repaired and further renovations were carried out in 1816 by Antonio Niccolini, who also remodelled the entrance-hall and the façade. In the same year, through the fatal negligence of an attendant who left a lighted lamp on the stage, a fierce fire completely gutted the theatre, leaving only a few smoking walls standing. Six days after the disaster, King Ferdinand himself gave orders for the theatre to be rebuilt as soon as possible, and Niccolini was again pressed into service. He completed his task in less than a year—another record—restoring the portico, façade and auditorium as they were before the fire. The stage was enlarged and the proscenium arch enhanced by a bas-relief portraying the Muses. Next to them was placed a figure of Time whose raised hand indicated the hours on the rotating dial of a clock which still functions today.

Dating from the same period are the present royal box and the great tempera painting adorning the ceiling, the work of Giuseppe Cammarano, executed from a design by Niccolini. The theatre was reopened about a year after the disastrous fire, on the King's birthday. A distinguished member of the audience was Stendhal, who wrote :

The great day of the San Carlo opening has at last arrived—wild enthusiasm, torrents of people, a dazzling auditorium . . . At first I felt as if I had been transported to the palace of some oriental emperor. My eyes were dazzled, my soul enraptured . . . There is nothing in the whole of Europe that can even give a distant idea of the place, let alone compare with it. This building, reconstructed in 300 days, is a coup d'état. It endears the King to the people more than the constitution granted to Sicily.

In 1884 lighting by gas was installed (electric light was to follow in 1890) and in 1854 Giuseppe Mancinelli produced a fine new curtain depicting Parnassus, which is still in existence even if seldom used. In 1938 a large foyer was added which, destroyed by bombing in 1943, was rebuilt in 1944 with materials released by the British Military Occupation authorities. The most recent alterations were those carried out in 1948 under the supervision of the present General Administrator, Pasquale Di Costanzo, whose aim was to restore to the San Carlo its former beauty and magnificence.

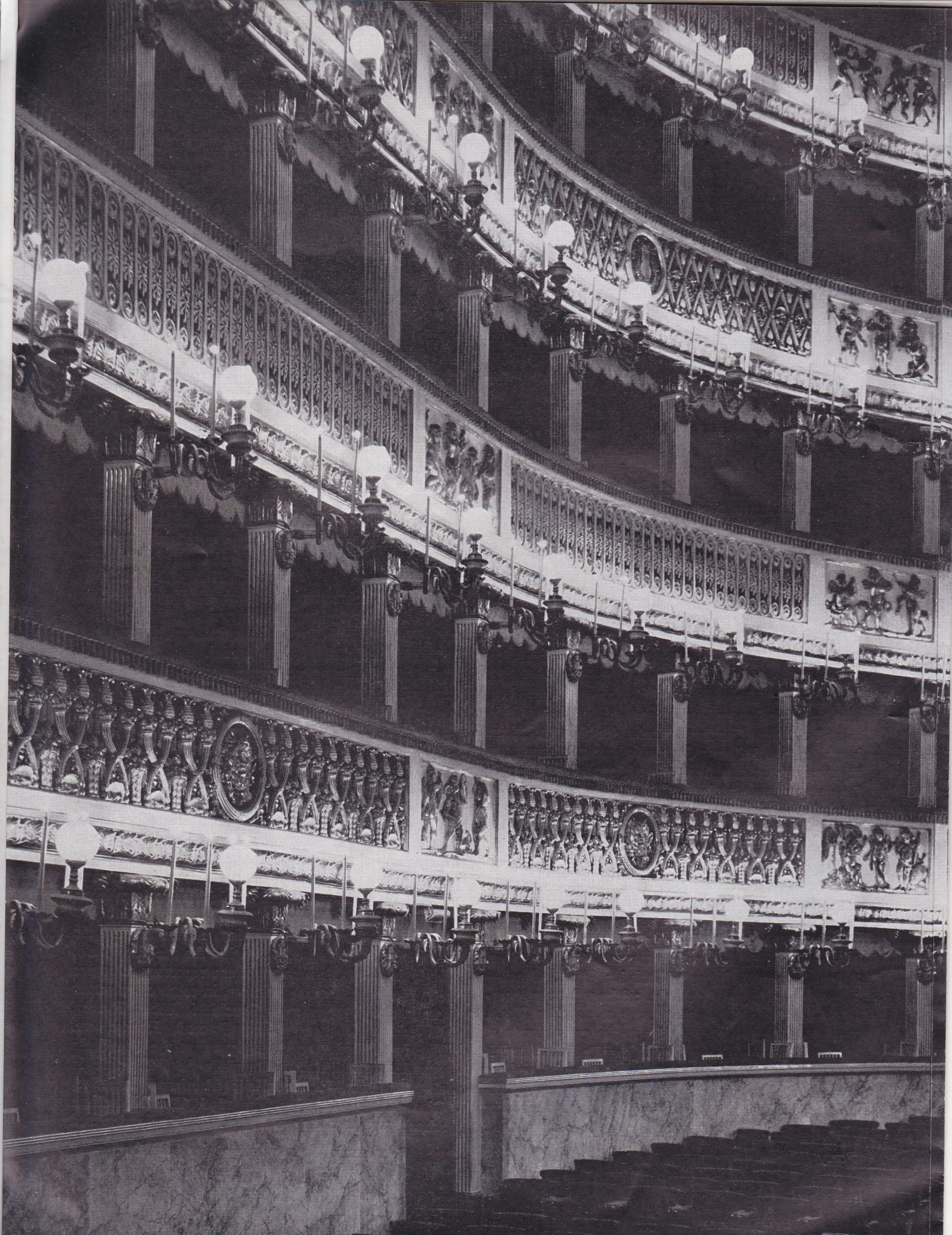
To return to the beginning, the San Carlo's very first production was *Achille in Sciro* by Domenico Sarro with a libretto by Metastasio, then at the height of his fame. The reports of the time speak of an ecstatic reception and prolonged applause, but it is as well to remember that according to the regulations issued by the Military Censor (whose task it was to keep an eye on the theatre) both applause and calls for encores were prohibited, these being strictly the sovereign's privilege. The San Carlo soon became a major artistic centre, staging all the most important Italian and foreign works with an impressive contribution by Neapolitan musicians from the four Conservatories that the city then boasted. The San Carlo can claim, perhaps uniquely, associations with entire generations of musicians. Leo, Piccinni, Paisiello, Pergolesi, Traetta, Cimarosa, Guglielmi, Cafaro, Hasse, Fenaroli, Anfossi, Insanguine, Galuppi, Paer, Puca, Zingarelli, Johann Christian Bach, Gluck—in other words, nearly all the celebrated opera composers of the 18th century came to the San Carlo. From these we pass gradually to the great names of the 19th century, dominated by Bellini, Rossini, Donizetti and later by Verdi. In the first half of the century the San Carlo enjoyed a period of rare brilliance under Domenico Barbaja, whom Alexandre Dumas called 'the prince of impresarios'. Of humble

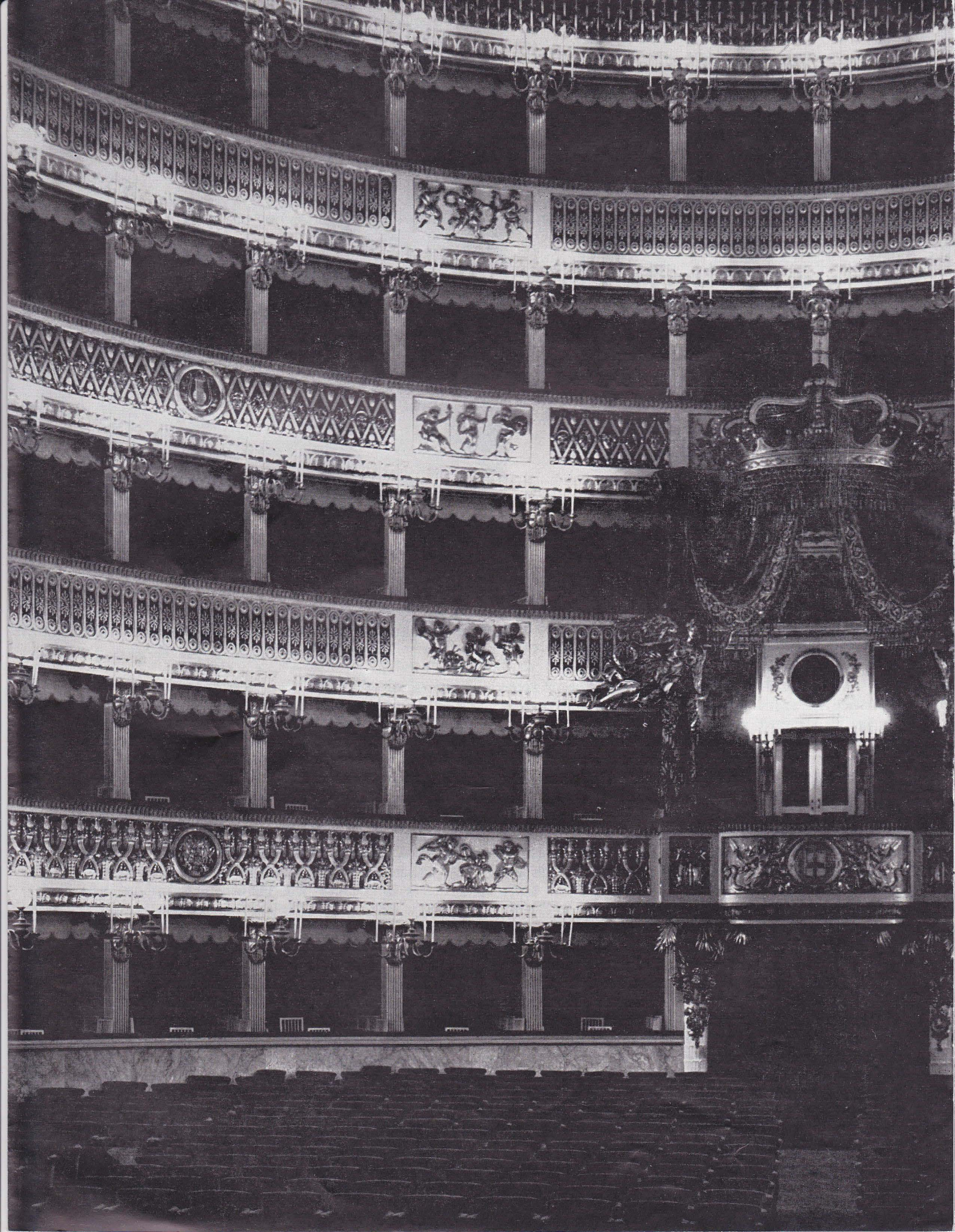
 * The Author of the article is Marchese *
 * Lucio Parisi who is attached to the San Carlo *
 * Theatre of Naples since 1944 and he is General *
 * Secretary. He is responsible for the organisation *
 * of the following tour of the San Carlo Opera *
 * abroad, London, Paris, Strasburgh and *
 * Edinburgh. *
 * The Editor is most grateful to Marchese *
 * Lucio Parisi for his very kind co-operation. *
 * *****

origin (he had been a dish-washer in a café in Milan), uneducated but shrewd, Barbaja knew precisely how to run the greatest and most famous opera house in Europe and closely followed developments in contemporary music. Thanks to him Bellini, Rossini and Donizetti found in Naples a stimulating atmosphere for their gifts. Rossini wrote five operas expressly for the San Carlo, Donizetti even more. The premiere of *Lucia di Lammermoor* on 26 September 1835 was a memorable event and in a way a particularly sad one, since Barbaja had left Naples and the management of the theatre for a period which was to last 18 months. Among operas Barbaja introduced to the Neapolitans were Spontini's *La Vestale*, Gluck's *Iphigénie en Aulide* and Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*. No less famous were the singers Barbaja engaged from all over Europe, including Isabella Colbran, his mistress, who eventually left him for Rossini.

In 1840, after 30 years as manager, Barbaja bade farewell to the San Carlo—this time for good. A year later, an opera by Giuseppe Verdi, was heard at the San Carlo for the first time—*Oberto, Conte di San Bonifacio*. It was followed by *Il Finto Stanislao*, *Nabucco*, *Alzira* and then *Luisa Miller*. The last piece was commissioned by the San Carlo and had a libretto by Salvatore Cammarano based on Schiller's play *Kabale und Liebe*. First given on 8 December 1849, *Luisa Miller* was excellently received and its success increased with each successive performance. Other new operas were written for the theatre in the same period by such established musicians as Mercadante, Pacini and Petrella.

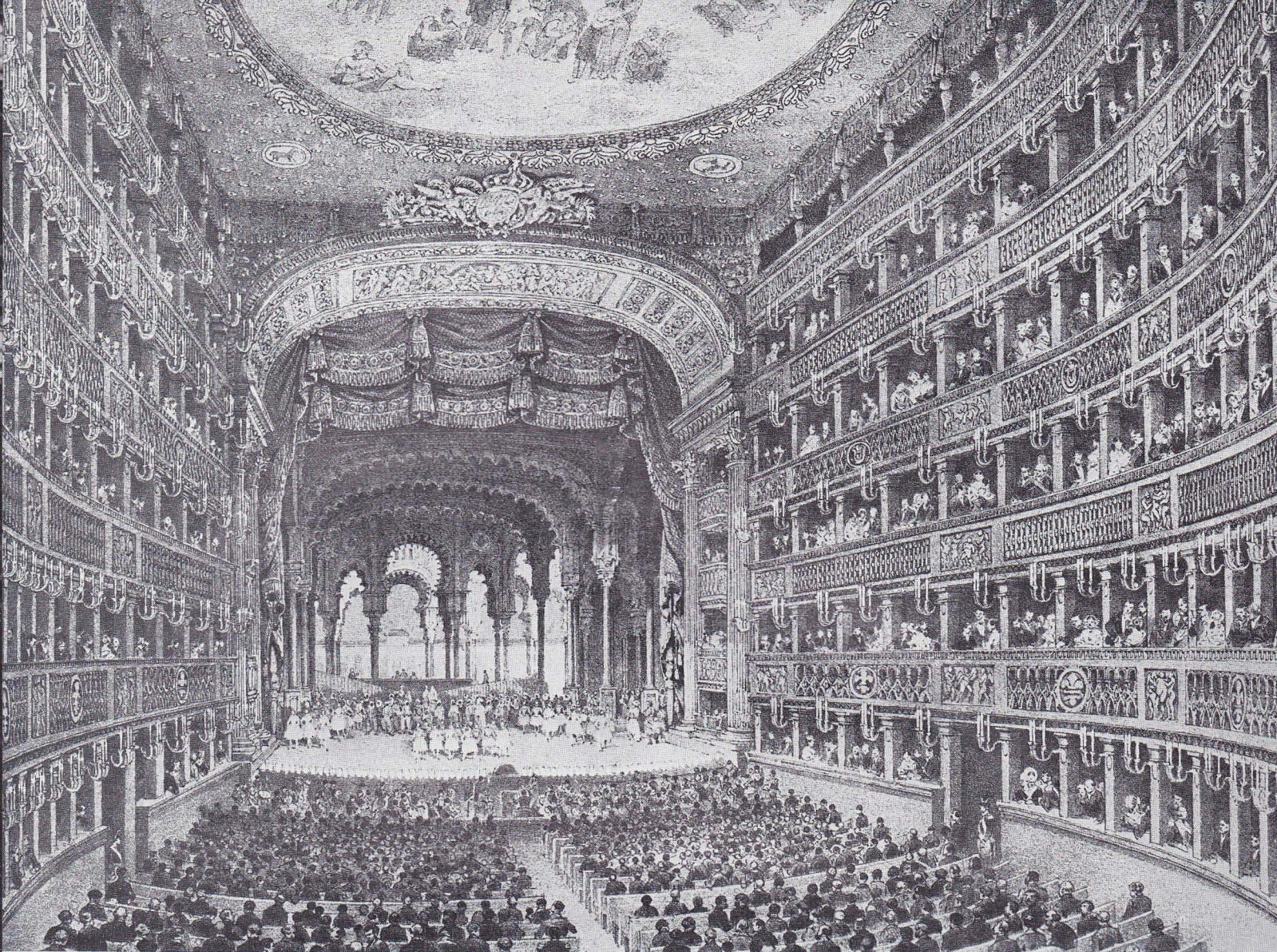
In 1860 Garibaldi's entry into Naples marked the beginning of an unsettled period for the San Carlo. Still, there was an increase in the repertory of operas and Neapolitans came to know, in some cases rather late in the day, works by Ponchielli, Auber, Flotow, Meyerbeer, Thomas, Bizet, Gounod, Halévy, etc. The first Wagner opera to appear at the San Carlo was *Lohengrin* in 1881. Puccini's *Le Villi* came in 1888, Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* in 1891, Giordano's *Mala Vita!* in 1896. The Neapolitan school of musicians was by now seriously depleted









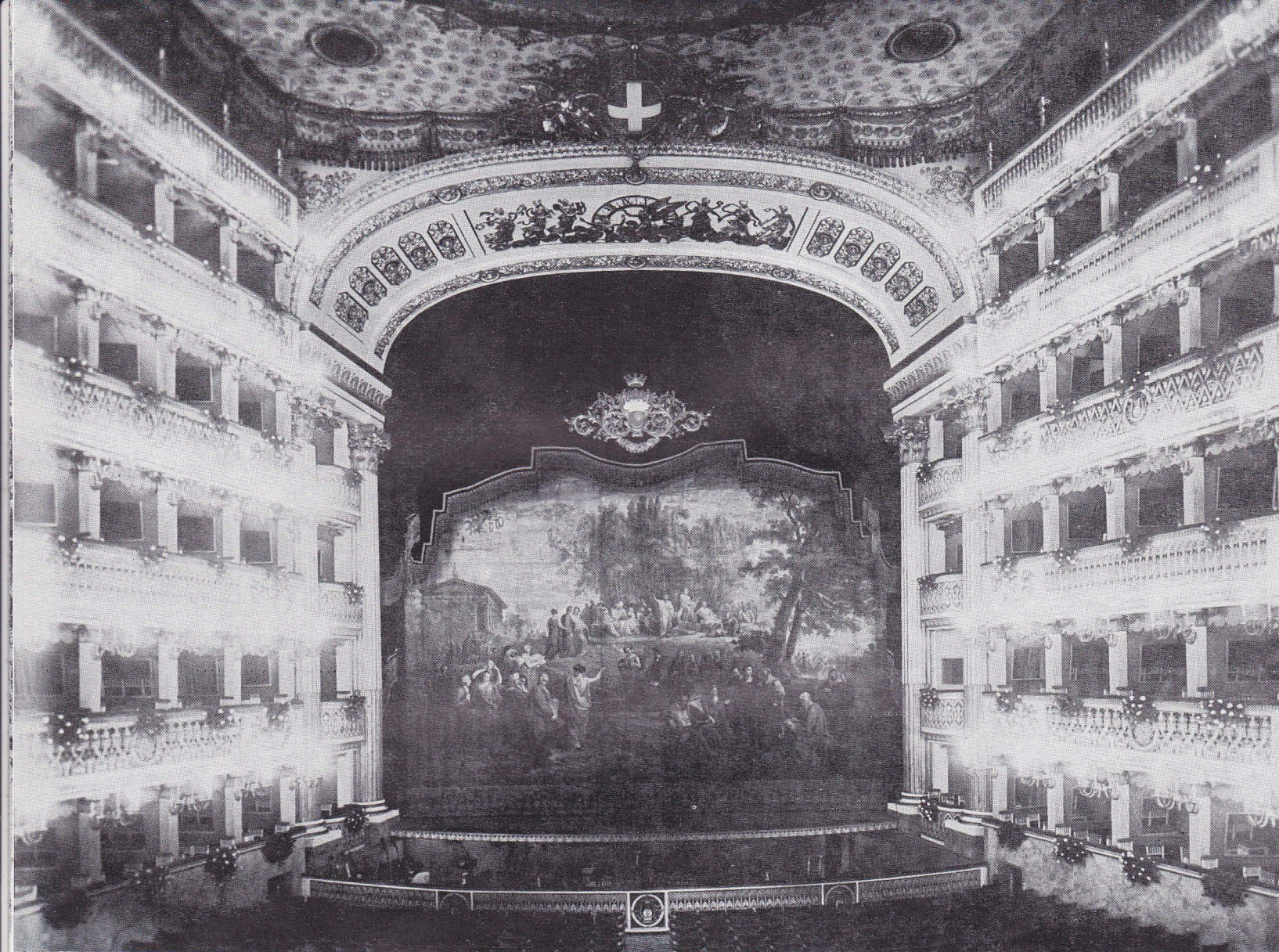


The interior of the San Carlo, Naples, about the middle of the last century.

but its presence was still felt in four exponents of the new *verismo* movement. Giordano, Alfano (who was to complete Puccini's *Turandot*), Leoncavallo and Cilea. Each of these was Neapolitan in musical development if not by birth, having studied at the Conservatorio di San Pietro a Majella, the only remaining academy of the four that existed in 1700.

The list of Italian and foreign composers whose works have been performed at the San Carlo in the last 60 years includes virtually every opera composer of this century and it would be quite impossible to list all the singers who have appeared there. The 'orchestra conductor' does not appear at the San Carlo before 1860. Previously composers conducted their own operas, seated either at the harpsichord or at the leader's desk. The first two conductors to mount the rostrum at the San Carlo were Nicola De Giosa and Giovanni Puzone, both worthy exponents of the Neapolitan School and composers in their own right.

They were followed by Serrao, Moretti, Scalisi, De Nerdis, Mancinelli (known throughout Europe), Mascagni, Campanini, Ferrari and Vitale. A most popular conductor was Leopoldo Mugnone who enjoyed a high reputation in Italy and abroad, and who discovered Mascagni at the Sonzogno Competition. The year 1907 was marked by two important events in the sphere of conducting—Giuseppe Martucci conducted the first Naples performance of *Tristan und Isolde* and Richard Strauss his *Salome* with Gemma Bellincioni in the title-role. After the death of Martucci, Toscanini directed a commemorative concert of his music—the only occasion he ever conducted the San Carlo Orchestra. He did return to Naples during the First World War in order to conduct Giordano's *Madame Sans-Gêne* but was prevented by a general strike which began on the day of the dress rehearsal. The conductor's list continues with names familiar to the present generation, among



Stage with Drop Curtain by Giuseppe Moncinelli

them Serafin, Marinuzzi, Gui, Guarnieri, Capuana, De Fabritiis, Santini, Bellezza, Erede, Bohm, Dobrowen, Rodzinski, Rossi, Knappertsbusch, Cluytens, Gavazzeni and Sanzogno.

Ballet deserves a brief mention. It is still very popular in Naples, and played a very important part in programmes during the 19th century. Indeed, ballets were often given *after* the opera to round off incredibly long performances which lasted well into the next morning.

Many visitors to the San Carlo, especially in the 19th century, wrote of their admiration for the theatre—among them Stendhal, Metternich, Taine, the Countess Blessington, Président De Brosses, Goethe and Alexandre Dumas. All were greatly impressed by the auditorium, rightly considered the most beautiful in Europe. The theatre is also famous for its gala performances on historical and political occasions. Here, as a matter of curiosity, is the programme for

the gala evening in honour of Edward VII during his visit in the spring of 1903: Prologue to *Mefistofele*, with Chaliapin; *Aida*, Acts 2 and 3; and *Coppelia*, Act 3; conductor, Leopoldo Mugnone.

While it is true that the last 60 years have scarcely been the most brilliant in the annals of the San Carlo, all credit is due to the present General Administrator, Pasquale Di Costanzo, for having revived the Neapolitans' flagging interest in opera and contemporary music. Creating what might be defined in political parlance as an 'opening' towards young people, Di Costanzo has often succeeded in restoring to the San Carlo the fabulous atmosphere of its glorious past. Responsible also for the material reconstruction of the theatre after the war, Di Costanzo is recognised as Domenico Barbaja's most distinguished successor, possessing his sure intuition, infallible judgement and bold enterprise.

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UGO BENELLI

(Tenor) received his musical training in the finishing school for young opera singers at the Scala in which he won a place after a nation-wide competition. Since his public career began in 1958 he has been active in the most noted opera houses of Europe — Palermo, Genoa, Parma and, of course, the Scala, besides Geneva, Zurich, Munich, Barcelona etc.—and also in North and South America. He has taken part in the Glyndebourne and Wexford Festivals. His recent long-play recordings of Rossini operas with famous casts have received critical acclaim.



RENATO BRUSON

(Baritone). This young baritone from Padua was also a winner at Spoleto in 1961 where he sang the part of Count di Luna in *Il Trovatore* which he is to sing in Dublin. After Spoleto he went to Rome for further study at the Rome Opera. This led to his second début, this time at the Rome Opera, in *I Puritani* in company with Virginia Zeani, Rossi Lemeni and Gianni Raimondi. Bruson has been engaged for leading roles at such famous opera theatres as the Fenice of Venice, the Massimo of Palermo, the Comunale of Florence and at other Continental opera houses.

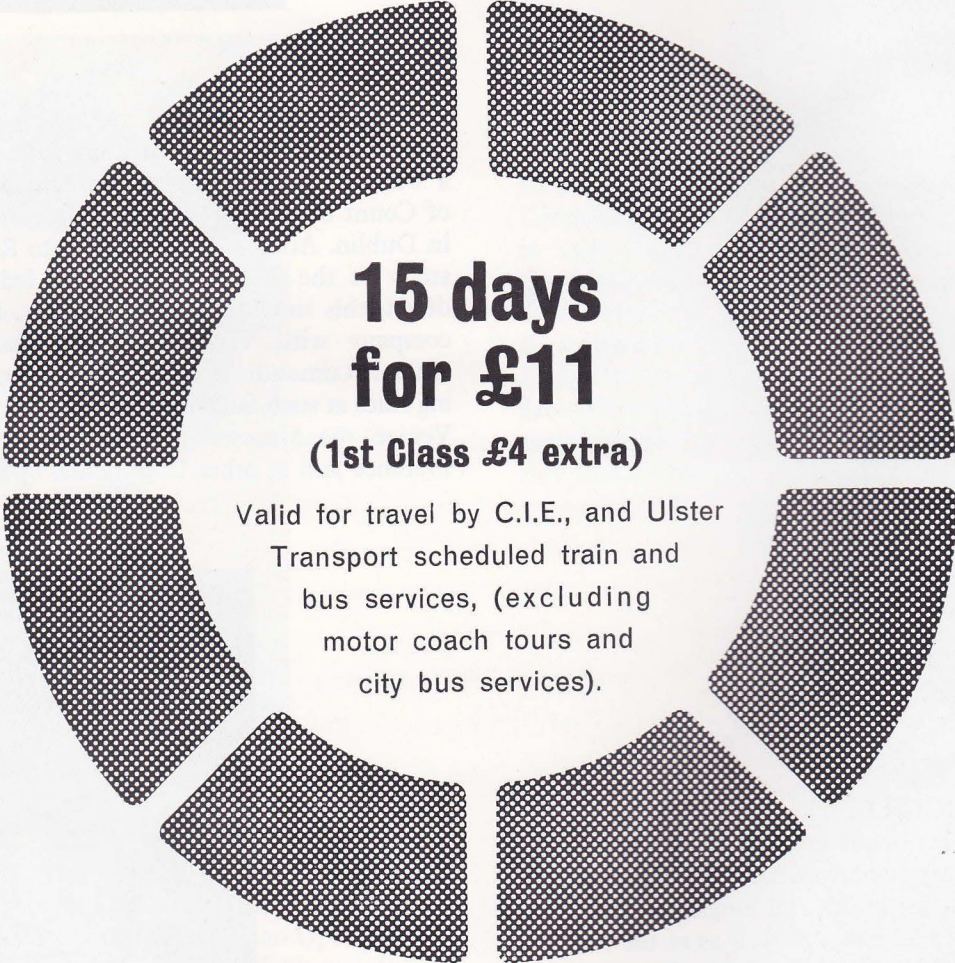
PIERO CAPPUCCILLI

(Baritone). Since his début in 1956 Piero Cappuccilli has appeared in every Italian opera house of importance as well as at the major theatres of Belgium, Denmark, Spain, France and Germany, as well as at the Metropolitan, New York. He has sung the leading baritone roles in the long-play recordings with Maria Callas of *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *La Gioconda* and in *The Marriage of Figaro*, and *Don Giovanni*, under Giulini with Sutherland, Schwartzkopf, Sciutti, Taddei etc. He took part in the gala opening performance of this year's Season at the Scala.



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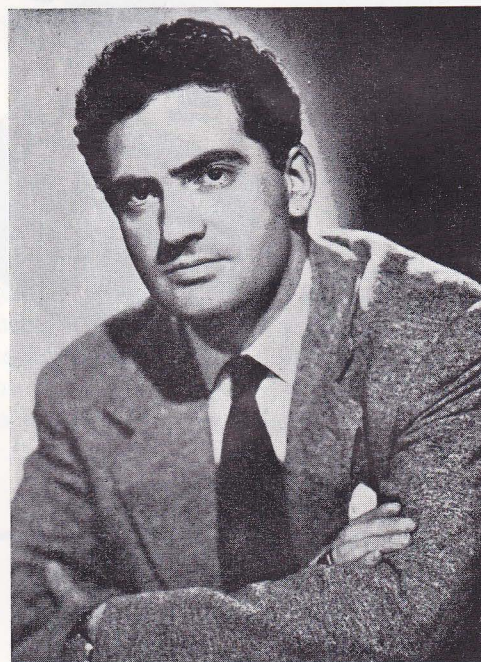


ATTILIO D'ORAZI

(Baritone). After winning the national singing competition of the Radio TV Italiana, he made his début as Figaro in *The Barber of Seville*. Later he sang in various opera houses in Italy and in Spain. Since his first appearances in Dublin nine years ago D'Orazi has been scaling the operatic heights. His recent engagements have covered the globe between Tokyo, Cairo, Amsterdam and Munich.

GIULIO FIORAVANTI

(Baritone) studied at the Santa Cecilia Conservatory in Rome under the famous baritone Stracciari. After his début at the Regio of Turin, Maestro Gianandrea Gavazzeni engaged him for the Scala of which he has become a regular member. At first Fioravanti undertook the lighter baritone roles but with the development of his voice he has since 1961 been singing the more dramatic baritone roles, especially Verdian, with great success. He has sung in all the major Italian theatres and has made full-length opera recordings with Callas and di Stefano. He has also appeared in television performances of opera.



LORIS GAMBELLI

(Bass) studied under the famous baritone Riccardo Stracciari. He won the International Singing Competition at Fabriano and there made his début in Donizetti's *La Favorita*. He has since sung in many important Italian opera houses. Abroad he has taken part in seasons in Madrid, Egypt, Denmark, Switzerland, Belgium, and in South America. He has been a frequent and welcome visitor to Dublin for the Italian Festivals.

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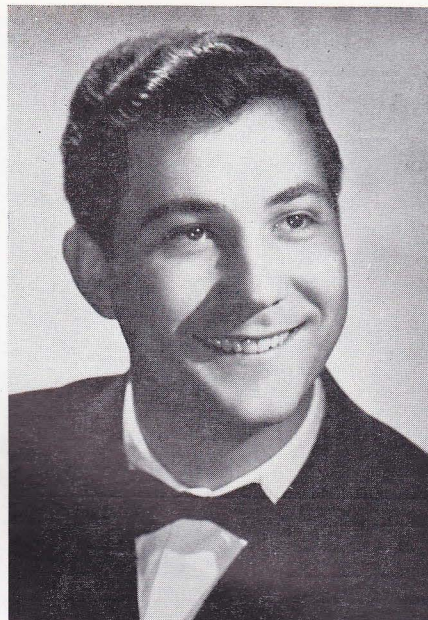
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VERIANO LUCHETTI

(Tenor), was another Spoleto winner. After several opera appearances sponsored by Spoleto he was engaged by the Fenice of Venice for the part of Wertha in the 1964/65 season. He took part in last years' Wexford Festival production of *La Traviata* and has already sung at the opera houses of Munich Wiesbaden and Cairo and appeared on Italian Television. This is his Dublin début.



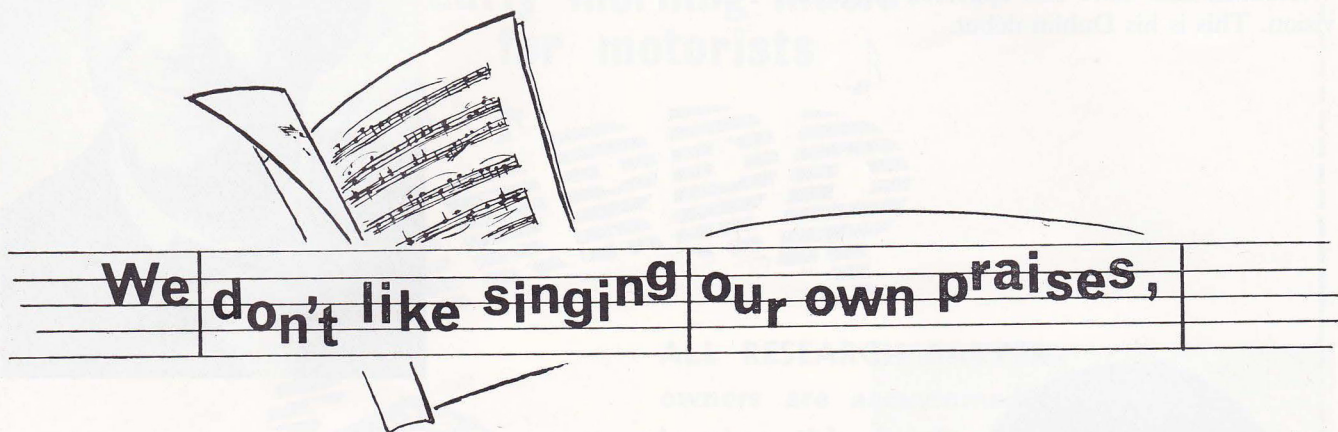
RUGGERO OROFINO

(Tenor) is a very recent recruit to operatic laurels. After engagements at the Piccola Scala, his first important success in the ordinary repertoire was at Cesena in Italy in the role of Turiddu in *Cavalleria*. He is now on the Scala roster and took part in the famous Scala visit to Moscow, singing in *Turandot* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*.



AUGUSTO PEDRONI

(Tenor). Studied singing at the Conservatorio "Palestrini" of Cagliari, Sardinia. After some ten years singing major tenor roles in opera he turned over to specialisation in supporting roles and as a singer of such he is intensely active as a regular participant in all the big Seasons throughout Italy, including Caracalla, Rome Opera and Naples. He has toured extensively with various opera groups in England, Scandinavia, Australia, Egypt, Yugoslavia and Spain.



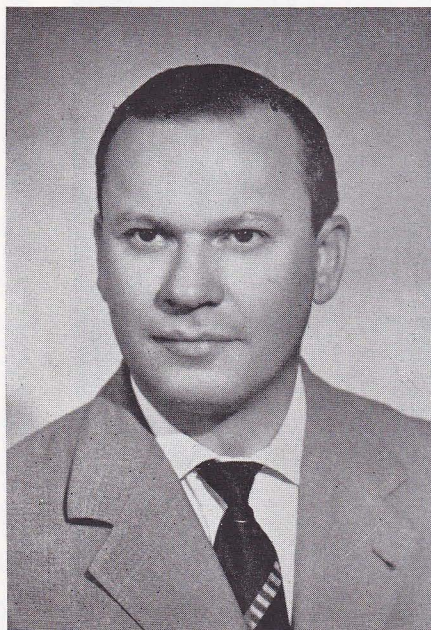
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ENZO TEI

(Tenor) is a native of the historic hill-city of Perugia where he studied music at the Liceo. His success at a Spoleto contest gained him his début in that city in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. He has made four previous visits to Dublin and in the intervals his activities have extended to most of the more important Italian theatres and also to Lisbon, Rio de Janeiro, Hamburg and the Scandinavian capitals. He comes to Dublin directly after opening the Florence May Festival with Verdi's *Luisa Miller*.



ERNESTO VEZZOSI

(Baritone) made his début at the Teatro Regio in Parma and then passed on to the Fenice in Venice, the Verdi in Trieste, San Carlo in Naples and others. Has taken part in tournees in Germany, Holland, Egypt, France, England and Ireland. One of the most versatile and dependable artists in opera, and indispensable in the supporting roles which he fills with unusual distinction and musicianship.

PAOLO WASHINGTON

(Bass), an Italian despite his name, is a leading bass in the Italian opera houses. He is equally at home in the *Boffo* and in the *straight* bass repertoire. He comes to Dublin for the first time to sing the part of Don Pasquale himself in Donizetti's opera after many appearances in this years seasons at Rome, Trieste, Lisbon and Florence.



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DON PASQUALE

GAETANO DONIZETTI, 1797 - 1848

Born in the North Italian town of Bergamo where he is commemorated by the fine Theatre bearing his name, Gaetano Donizetti was the composer of nearly seventy operas. About six of these have retained their place in the popular repertory, including *Don Pasquale*, which is rated by many as the composer's best work. Its brilliant score is matched by the natural wit and comedy of an excellent, if conventional, libretto.

Don Pasquale was first performed in Paris in January, 1843. The scene is laid in Rome in the early nineteenth century. There are three Acts.

ACT I

The scintillating Overture establishes a cheerful mood and the curtain rises on a room in Don Pasquale's house. The Don (Bass) — a stock figure in early comedy — is old and crusty, but contemplates matrimony. We find him awaiting his friend and confidant, Doctor Malatesta, whom he has entrusted with the office of finding him a suitable bride. The Doctor (Baritone) soon arrives. Having failed to dissuade Pasquale from his silly idea of marrying so late in life, and in order (as we shall see) to help Ernesto, Pasquale's nephew, Malatesta has devised a complicated plan to circumvent the marriage. Pursuing this plan, he tells Pasquale that he has found the the very wife for him — a lovely young creature, still in a convent school, as good as she is beautiful, and, incidentally, the Doctor's own sister, Sofronia. Malatesta's description of her in his aria, *Bella siccome un angelo* ("Sweet as an angel") so entrances Pasquale that Malatesta is sent off to produce this paragon at once. The Don, alone, foolishly pictures himself as a fiery romantic bridegroom ("*Ah, un fuoco insolito!*") and relishes the prospect of the shock his marriage will mean to his impertinent young nephew, Ernesto, and his expectations. When Ernesto (Tenor) enters the old man discourses on his favourite topic, the necessity of Ernesto marrying a certain wealthy lady. But Ernesto will not hear of it because he already loves another — Norina. Greatly annoyed, Pasquale bluntly announces his own proposed marriage, telling Ernesto that he will have to leave the house and dis-inheriting him as well. All this emerges in their duet which is introduced by Ernesto's bewailing this shattering of his dreams in the delicate aria, "*Sogno soave e casto.*" The young man is further disillusioned when he hears that Doctor Malatesta, on whose

support he had been counting, now appears to be abetting his uncle's own marriage.

The second scene introduces Ernesto's sweetheart, Norina (Soprano), in her own house. We find her reading a romantic novel and musing over a tender love scene in the cavatina, "*Quel guardo, il cavaliere.*" A dismaying letter arrives from Ernesto and soon after it Doctor Malatesta. He has come to explain to Norina how he proposes to avert the serious difficulties which Pasquale's marriage would create for Ernesto and herself. He hopes to cure Pasquale finally of this foolishness by arranging for him a mock marriage. Norina will be passed off as Malatesta's sister, Sofronia, in the role of "bride" while his cousin will masquerade as the Notary. The ceremony over, it will be up to Norina herself to make life so miserable for Pasquale that he will be only too glad after his experience to renounce all matrimonial ambitions when, in due time, he learns that the marriage was bogus. Norina enters into the spirit of the thing and in the merry duet, "*Pronta io son,*" Malatesta rehearses her in the role she is to play.

ACT II

Ernesto is preparing to leave Pasquale's house dejectedly proclaiming in the aria, "*Cercherò lontana terra,*" his firm intention of setting off to end his days in some foreign land. On his exit, Pasquale comes in preening himself and very satisfied with the fine figure he believes he still cuts at 70 years of age. Malatesta duly arrives with Norina, the "bride." Pasquale is much gratified at the excessive modesty of her demeanour though she obstinately refuses to remove her heavy veil. When she does so at last, the Don is so entranced by her beauty that he wants the marriage to take place there and then. The counterfeit contract is drawn up with Pasquale directing the insertion of the clause that his lovely young wife shall be mistress of all his property. The unexpected appearance of Ernesto, ignorant of the plot and about to make a scene, threatens to upset all Malatesta's work. The Doctor, however, manages to put Ernesto "au courant" with what is really happening so that he is even persuaded to act as witness.

No sooner is the ceremony over than Norina suddenly becomes a tartar and takes over control. First, she cancels Pasquale's order that Ernesto must leave the house — her husband is so old that she will need Ernesto as escort. Next, the establishment must be

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entirely refurnished ; six horses and two carriages are to be ordered and at least twenty-four extra servants engaged — all young and handsome. The Act ends in a quartet where each character expresses his or her reactions to this sensational turn of events.

ACT III

Pasquale's house again. Norina is revelling in a tremendous spending spree, indifferent to Pasquale's mounting rage as he tots up the fabulous bills. Worse still, she is preparing to go to the theatre without him. His attempts to prevent her earns for poor Pasquale a heap of abuse and a slap across the face. After a moment's remorse at having overplayed her part in striking the old man, Norina trips off telling Pasquale that bed would suit him best at his age. As she goes, she purposely drops a letter. From this the Don learns that Norina is to have an assignation that very evening in his own garden, the lover's signal to be a serenade. For Pasquale this is the last straw and he sends for Malatesta to advise him about a divorce. When he has left, the army of new servants assemble, and in an amusing chorus they discuss the recent goings-on in the house, the while admonishing each other to be prudent as this diverting employment is far too profitable to lose. From a brief exchange between Ernesto and Malatesta, it emerges that the letter Pasquale found is all part of Malatesta's plan. Ernesto exits hastily as Pasquale approaches to unburden his woes to Malatesta, wailing that he would now be a thousand times better off if he had never married at all. In the patter duet commencing "*Cheti, cheti, immantinenti.*" the pair settle on a counter-plan — to surprise the couple at their assignation and send away the guilty wife.

Scene 2 takes place in the garden. Outside Ernesto sings his serenade, "*Com' è gentil*" — one of the most beautiful of tenor arias. The equally entrancing and very famous duet "*Tornami a dir che m'ami*" — ("*Tell me again you love me*") follows when Norina admits him. At its conclusion Pasquale and Malatesta appear and, according to plan, Ernesto slips into the house unseen. When Pasquale demands to know who her companion was Norina puts on a fine show of temperament and injured innocence, defying his orders that she must leave his house. Here, the able Doctor Malatesta takes the situation in hand and manages affairs so beautifully that in no time everyone is happy again — the Don to be rid of Norina who plagued him so, and Ernesto to receive his uncle's ready consent to his union with the same lady and a very handsome annual allowance from his uncle thrown in.

So the story ends very happily indeed in the quartet introduced by the master-brain, Doctor Malatesta, with the words, "*Bravo, bravo, Don Pasquale !*"

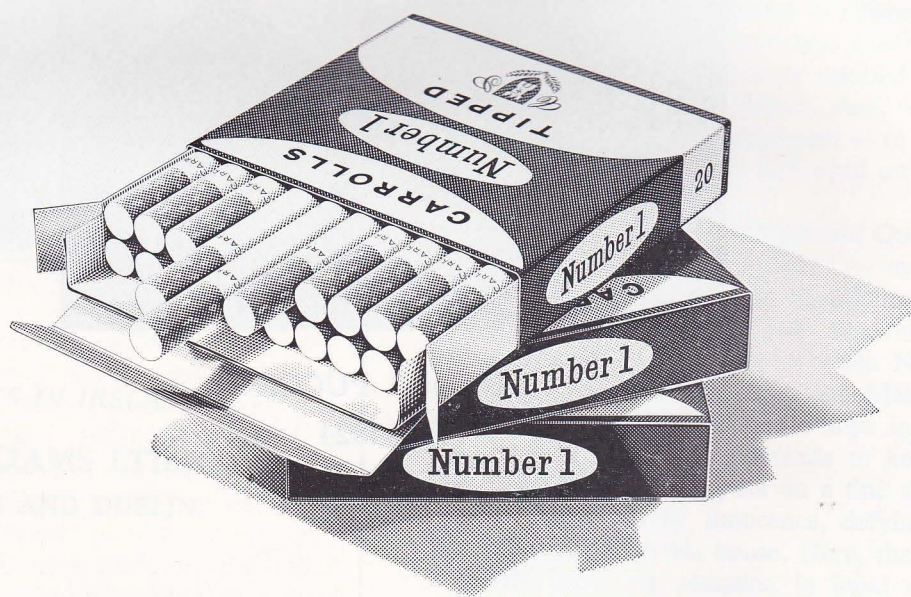


GIACOMO PUCCINI

1858-1924

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from a hand, skilful
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TOSCA

GIACOMO PUCCINI, 1858 - 1924

This melodrama of Puccini has been called an operatic "shocker". At any rate, its story has the strong flavour of the Italian *verismo* school. The lurid plot was drawn by the librettists Illica and Giacosa from the Sardou play which Bernhardt made famous.

The time is given precisely as June, 1800, and the characters have some relation to real historical figures of the period. Italy was then divided. The French under Napoleon occupied the North while Rome, from which they had only recently been dislodged, was held for the Royal House of Naples and Sicily whose Queen, Maria Carolina, sister of Marie Antoinette, is named in the opera but does not appear.

"Tosca" received its first production in January, 1900, at the old Costanzi Theatre (now the Teatro dell' Opera), Rome. The setting is Rome itself.

ACT I

With three tremendous chords from the orchestra, representing the brutality of the character of Scarpia, who dominates the opera, the curtain rises on Bernini's Church of Sant' Andrea della Valle, Rome. The chapel of the Attavanti family is on the right. A dishevelled figure enters hastily. It is Cesare Angelotti (bass), an important prisoner of State, who has just escaped from the prison of Castel Sant' Angelo. He searches for the key to the Attavanti chapel and finds it at the foot of a statue of the Madonna where it had been hidden for him by his sister, the Marchesa Attavanti. As he disappears inside the chapel the Sacristan (baritone), a comic figure, hobbles in. Noon strikes and as the Sacristan concludes his Angelus, Mario Cavaradossi (tenor), a painter and Tosca's lover, enters to resume his painting of the Madonna. It is a blonde Madonna whose colouring and features reproduce those of the Marchesa Attavanti whom the painter had observed while at her prayers in the chapel. Disregarding the mutterings of the Sacristan who is scandalised by the painter's irreverence, Cavaradossi sings the aria *Recondita armonia* as he muses on the contrast between the fair subject of his painting and the dark beauty of his beloved Floria Tosca.

When the Sacristan has left Angelotti emerges and asks the help of his friend and political sympathiser, Cavaradossi. Just then the voice of Tosca herself is heard outside. As it grows more impatient, the painter hurries Angelotti back to his hiding place, pressing his own basket of food into the hungry fugitive's hand. When finally admitted Tosca is plainly ruffled by her lover's delay while the voices she has heard alert a suspicion that his companion may have

been a lady — perhaps the Marchesa Attavanti whose features she suddenly recognises on the canvas. She makes quite a scene of jealousy and temper — Floria Tosca was not for nothing the great prima donna of her day — until mollified by Cavaradossi's endearments and the promise of an assignation at his villa that evening. (Duet — *Qual occhio al mondo*). She leaves the Church and Angelotti re-emerges. Cavaradossi directs him to his villa outside Rome where there is a dried-up well in the garden as a safe refuge should the place be searched. They exit hastily. The Sacristan enters, disappointed to find the painter gone and nobody to hear the great news — the (premature) report of Napoleon's defeat at Marengo — to celebrate which there is to be a *Te Deum* in the Church and a public holiday. Choristers and worshippers begin to assemble but all are visibly terrified by the sudden appearance (announced by the three great chords with which the opera opened) of Baron Scarpia (baritone), the dreaded Chief of the Roman police. He and his bailiffs have traced Angelotti to the Church. A search of the Attavanti Chapel yields a fan bearing the Attavanti crest and an empty lunch basket. The Sacristan admits the latter to be Cavaradossi's and that, though the basket is empty now, the painter had said that he would eat nothing that day. Scarpia at once connects Cavaradossi with the prisoner's escape. When Tosca re-appears, Scarpia hopes by working on her jealousy to discover from her something of the painter's movements. With the evidence of the crested fan which he pretends to have found beside the painter's easel, Scarpia suggests to Tosca (already disconcerted by finding the painter gone and his work abandoned) that her lover has met the Marchesa Attavanti in the Church and has already taken her to the villa. This provokes a violent outburst from Tosca. As she leaves Scarpia orders that she be followed.

The ritual of the *Te Deum* of Thanksgiving begins with tolling of bells and booming of canon. A Cardinal officiates. Against the swelling music of the sacred words, the voice of Scarpia is heard in unholy counterpoint as he declares himself ready to renounce his hopes of heaven if he could send Cavaradossi to his death and have Tosca for himself.

ACT II

In the Farnese Palace in Rome Scarpia sups and muses with relish on his hoped-for conquest of Tosca whose voice reaches him from the Queen's apartments in the music of the Cantata celebrating the victory.

Spoletta (tenor), a police agent, reports that a search of Cavaradossi's villa yielded no trace of Angelotti. The painter has, however, been held and Scarpia orders him to be brought in for questioning. Cavaradossi tells nothing. Tosca has also been summoned by Scarpia and arrives as her lover is sent for further interrogation under torture in an adjoining room. Unnerved by Scarpia's relentless pressure and by the cries of her lover from the torture room, Tosca breaks down and betrays the secret of Angelotti's hide-out — *Nel poggio nel giardino* — "In the well in the garden." By telling Scarpia what he wants to know, she also incriminates her lover for abetting the prisoner's escape for which death is the penalty.

When the painter is brought in again — now limp and bleeding — he only upbraids Tosca for her betrayal and openly exults ("*Vittoria!*") when Spoletta brings the news that Napoleon had triumphed and not been defeated at Marengo. His words seal his fate and he is dragged away.

Scarpia now resumes his game of cat-and-mouse with Tosca. Blandly he makes his offer — she can save her Cavaradossi by surrendering to himself. Tosca's despair and revulsion at the infamous proposal are expressed in the aria — possibly the most beautiful in modern Italian opera — *Vissi d'arte, vissi d'amore*. In this so-called "Prayer" Tosca asks why she, who had lived only for love and for music and had harmed no living soul should be abandoned by Heaven to grief and shame like this.

Scarpia awaits her answer. Acquiescence is finally wrung from her as the executioner's drums are heard outside and Spoletta awaits Scarpia's orders for the disposal of the painter. But Tosca makes a condition — she must have safe-conducts across the frontier for both herself and Cavaradossi. Almost too readily Scarpia agrees and in her hearing instructs Spoletta that while the painter's execution must proceed, it will be a "simulated" one — "as we did in the Palmieri case." While Scarpia writes the passports Tosca, leaning for support against the supper table, sees her opportunity. Grasping a knife from the table she is ready for Scarpia when he approaches her and plunges it into his heart. She watches his death struggles without remorse — "Die . . . and may thy soul be damned!" Only when at last he is still does she relent and cry: "Now could I forgive him." After prising the safe-conduct from the stiffening fingers, Tosca pauses for a moment to reflect that before this man whom she has killed all Rome had trembled — *Davanti a lui tremava tutta Roma!*"

With a macabre touch of theatre — Floria Tosca was an actress — she carries two lighted candles from the supper table and places them beside the corpse and then a crucifix on his breast before stealing from the room.

Sixty-Two

ACT III

Before daylight on the battlements of the Castel Sant' Angelo. The sound of sheep bells and the song of a shepherd boy are heard as he drives his flock to graze. The bells of Rome herald the dawn which will reveal the Eternal City and St. Peter's in the distance. Introduced by a long orchestral passage we now reach the famous aria — "*E lucevan le stelle*" — as Cavaradossi awaiting his execution writes his farewell to Floria Tosca. As it ends Floria herself hurries joyfully in. There ensues an ecstatic duet beginning with her dramatic description of her killing of Scarpia and of how she has won freedom for both of them. He kisses the soft hands ("*O dolci mani!*") that she had stained with blood for him. Then hastily she coaches Cavaradossi for his rôle in the "simulated" execution that must take place. Fretfully she waits as the firing squad takes its position and the shots ring out. Cavaradossi falls. When the soldiers have marched away she gives the signal to rise. But there is no response. The bullets were real and Cavaradossi is dead. Scarpia has cheated to the last. Scarpia's murder has now been discovered and Spoletta and others rush in to take Tosca. Evading them she runs to the ramparts and with the words "*O Scarpia, avanti a Dio!*" — ("Scarpia, we meet before God!"), Floria Tosca flings herself from the high parapet to death below.

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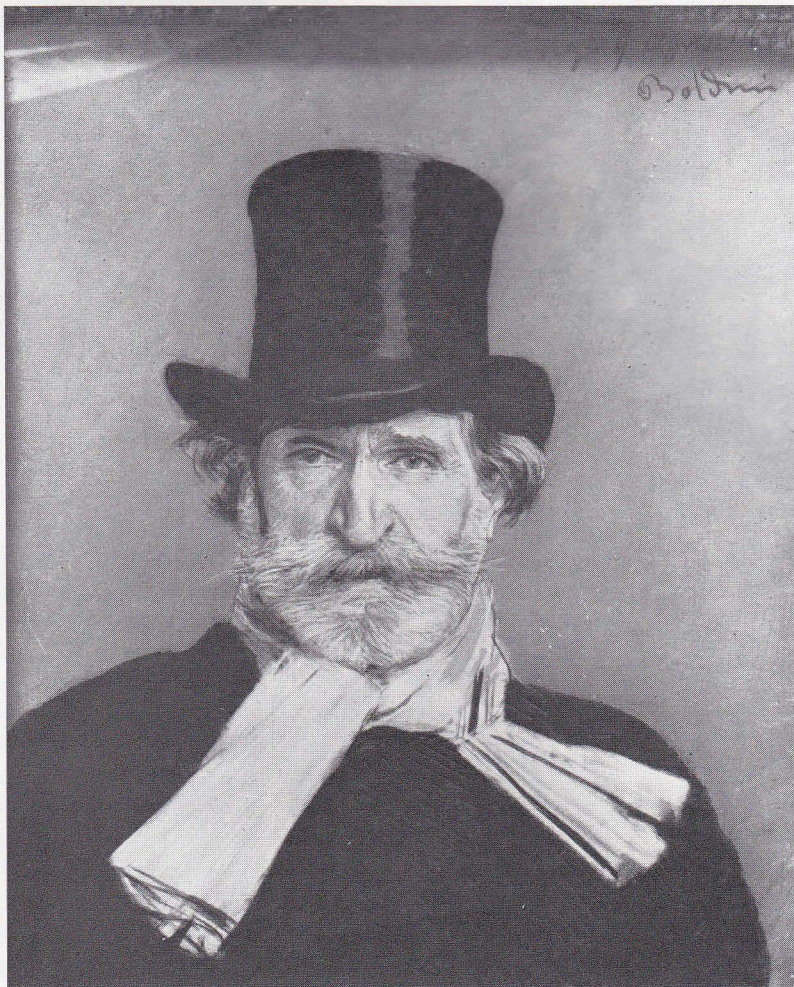
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GIUSEPPE VERDI

1813 — 1901



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LA TRAVIATA

GIUSEPPI VERDI, 1813 - 1901

"La Traviata" forms with "Rigoletto" and "Il Trovatore" the trilogy of Verdi's great popular operas. All three were performed for the first time within the short space of two years.

Based on Dumas' "La Dame aux Camélias" which Verdi had seen played in Paris, "La Traviata" received its première on 6 March, 1853, in Venice. Despite the enormous and instant success of "Rigoletto" at the same theatre two years previously, "La Traviata" failed dismally at first to please the public. The causes of the failure were several. There were the inevitable first-night mishaps. Some of the singers were ill and the fourth Act spectacle of the soprano Salvini-Donatelli, one of the most corpulent sopranos of her time, enacting the part of a heroine who dies of consumption excited the mirth of the audience. Then, too, the subject of the life and death of a demi-mondaine rather shocked the susceptibilities of an opera audience of the day which had already received the unaccustomed jolt of an opera in contemporary dress.

It was not long, however, before the opera achieved its due recognition and it has remained one of the best (if not *the* best) beloved of all operas.

The libretto is by Piave. The events take place in Paris and are usually ascribed to the early nineteenth century.

ACT I

In the salon of the beautiful demi-mondaine, Violetta Valéry (soprano), a party is in progress. Among the guests is Alfred Germont (tenor). He is introduced to Violetta by Gaston (tenor) who explains to her that for a year and more the young man has been in love with her from a distance. Invited by Violetta to sing a drinking song, Alfred launches into the spirited *Libiamo nei lieti calici* in praise of the gay life. As the guests are about to go dancing in another room, Violetta is stricken by a sudden faintness and a spasm of coughing—a sinister premonition of the fatal disease that already ravages her. She quickly recovers, however. As soon as they are alone, Alfred tells her of his long-felt love. (*Un di felice, eterea.*) Violetta at first takes this declaration lightly and advises him that it were best to forget her. Seemingly as an after-thought when Alfred is about to leave, she gives him one of her camélias with the promise that she will meet him again "when the flower has withered".

When all her guests have gone, Violetta's great *scena*, "*Ah, forse è lui*" begins. Strangely perturbed by her encounter with the young man, the brittle woman of the world wonders whether this might not

be what she has never yet experienced—a serious love (*un serio amore*). With a bitter laugh she quickly dismisses these wistful thoughts as folly. Her chosen path of frivolous dissipation must now, she knows, be followed to its end. But as towards the close of the brilliant *cabaletta*, the voice of Alfred reaches her from below her balcony we know that her resolve is already weakening and that the two are destined to meet again.

ACT II

Violetta and Alfred have indeed met again and have been three months together in her secluded country house near Paris. In his aria *Dei miei bollenti spiriti* Alfred tells of their happiness in this rural haven of peace. Annina, Violetta's maid, enters. She is returning, Alfred learns, from Paris whither she had been sent to sell most of her mistress's remaining possessions in order to pay the considerable expenses of the establishment. Greatly shocked and humiliated by this unexpected information he declares he will go himself to Paris at once to raise some money. When Violetta has re-entered, a visitor is announced. It is Georges Germont (baritone), Alfred's father, come to rescue his son from, as her imagines, the toils of a mercenary female. From being nonplussed by the dignity with which Violetta meets his charge ("I am a woman, sir, and in my own house"), old Germont is further discomposed when she quickly convinces him, with proof in hand, that hers is the money, not Alfred's, which pays for all this "luxury" he has indicated. He begs here, however, to leave Alfred, pleading that while the family scandal of their association remains, the young man whom his daughter loves will not marry her. Violetta at first violently refuses the strange demand—she would rather die, killed by the disease with which she is stricken, than give up Alfred. This dialogue proceeds in the form of a duet of great pathos. Finally, convinced by Germont's reminder that as soon as her youth and beauty fade she will have no hold on Alfred ("What then?" he asks), Violetta consents. In return she asks only a blessing of the old man. Germont goes to wait in the garden for his son. As Violetta is writing a farewell letter to Alfred the latter enters in search of his father. Concealing her letter from Alfred's eyes, Violetta embraces him and in the great outburst *Amami, Alfredo, quant'io t'amo . . . Addio!* (the climax of the opera) she declares undying love for him. She runs distractedly from the room. A servant soon enters with Violetta's letter. As Alfred reads the shattering words, Germont père re-appears. Neither

his comforting words nor his appeal (*Di Provenza!*) to the prodigal to return to his family can calm Alfred's frenzy. Believing that Violetta has left him to return to Paris and a former lover, the Baron Douphol, Alfred dashes off in pursuit of the runaway.

ACT III

Paris. The salon in the house of Flora (mezzo-soprano), a friend of Violetta's. The guests are entertained by a ballet featuring Spanish gypsies and matadors. All Violetta's old friends are there. News of her separation from Alfred has already reached Paris so that on the arrival of Alfred, who is soon followed by Violetta on the arm of Baron Douphol, the atmosphere becomes electric. Alfred sits down at a card table and, excited by his phenomenal winnings, keeps up a run of ironic comments designedly offensive to Violetta and the Baron. The latter reacts, joins the card game and loses to Alfred. As they rise to go to supper the Baron remarks that he will have his revenge after supper. Alfred's reply is a veiled challenge to a duel. Violetta, in great agitation, returns to the empty stage. She has sent for Alfred to warn him to beware of the Baron, a dangerous swordsman. Keeping her promise to his father, she maintains to him that she loves him no more and that the Baron is now her "protector". Enraged by this, Alfred loudly recalls all the guests. Pointing to Violetta, he proclaims the favours he received from her and with the brutal words *Qui testimon vi chiamo ch'ora pagato io l'ho* ("I call you all to witness that I've paid in full") he throws his winnings at her feet. Old Germont, a witness

to the shameful episode, disowns the son who insults a woman thus. The Baron challenges Alfred to a duel and all the company express their reproaches in the choral ending to the Act.

ACT IV

The last Act is introduced by the beautiful orchestral prelude to which the curtain rises on Violetta's bedroom. She is sick and almost penniless, with only the faithful Annina to attend her. It is early morning and Carnival time. Dr. Grenvil visits the invalid who is not deceived by his comforting assurances of recovery. To Annina the Doctor confides that her mistress has but a few hours to live.

Left alone for a moment, Violetta re-reads a cherished letter from old Germont which tells her that after the duel, in which the Baron was wounded, Alfred had to fly the country; that he now understood the nature of Violetta's great sacrifice and was hastening back to her. "Too late!" she cries and in the very moving soliloquy *Addio del passato* she pictures her approaching end, lonely and forgotten, her beauty gone. Outside the sounds of Carnival in Paris are heard.

Alfred arrives. After their ecstatic greeting the lovers dream of beginning life anew far away from Paris (Duet: *Parigi, o cara, noi lasceremo*). In her new-found happiness Violetta for a moment imagines her health returning and desperately clutches at the possibility of living. But her brief candle of hope soon flickers down again. She rallies only to give Alfred her picture in miniature, in memory of happier times, before expiring in his arms.

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IL TROVATORE

GIUSEPPE VERDI 1813—1961

"IL TROVATORE", opera in four Acts, was first performed in January, 1853, at the Apollo Theatre, Rome.

The complicated and sometimes improbable libretto

was drawn by Cammarano from the Guttierrez drama of the same name.

Despite its 109 years the work remains firmly in the Italian repertoire of the world's lyric stages.

THE STORY OF THE OPERA

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ACT I

Scene I. A hall in the Aliaferia palace.

When the opera begins Ferrando is telling how, years before, a gypsy was discovered at dead of night watching the sleeping infant son of the Count of Luna. Seized and burnt as a witch, in her death agony she called on her daughter, Azucena, to revenge her. Already Azucena had stolen the child with the intention of casting it into the flames which had consumed her mother. But she is overcome by her emotions and on recovering finds to her horror that it was her own child that she had killed. She had gone away with the Count's son, Manrico, who is ignorant of the circumstances of his birth. He is now grown to manhood and is a troubadour. Meanwhile, the Count of Luna has died and a second son has succeeded to the title. Both the young Count and Manrico love Leonore. She loves Manrico, whom she has only seen once, though she recognises as his the voice of a troubadour who often serenades her. Hearing him sing one night she descends into the garden (*Scene 2*). Consumed with passion, the Count has chosen that moment to visit her, and Leonore mistakes his shrouded figure for that of her lover. The Count is startled to hear Manrico's voice denouncing Leonora as faithless. They fight, and Manrico escapes badly wounded.

ACT II

Scene I. The slopes of a mountain in Biscay.

A great fire is burning. The gypsy band sings the Anvil Chorus. Manrico is almost recovered and is lying

on a couch near Azucena. Azucena repeats to them the fate of her mother and of the tragic end of her infant son. She urges Manrico to kill the Count and reproaches him for not having done so when they had met in combat. A messenger arrives with the news that the Prince has entrusted the defence of Castellor to Manrico. The same night Leonora is to take the veil, convinced that Manrico is dead. Ignoring Azucena's entreaties Manrico hurries away.

The hour has arrived for Leonora to take the vow and as the chanting of the nuns is heard within the convent, outside the Count and his followers lie in wait to abduct Leonora (*Scene 2*). At the last moment Manrico arrives and rescues her.

ACT III

The Count of Luna's camp before the walls of Castellor, to which the Count is laying siege to revenge himself on Manrico. The soldiers are heard singing and later Ferrando arrives with the news that a gypsy woman has been caught prowling near the camp. The Count questions her and he becomes aware that she was involved in the disappearance of his brother. He signs to the guards to take her away.

Safe within the massive walls of Castellor (*Scene 2*), Leonora and Manrico are preparing to celebrate their wedding when news reaches them of the capture of Azucena. Without delay Manrico leads a sortie. He is captured and thrown into the same cell as Azucena.

Sixty-Seven



ACT IV

Outside the tower in which her lover is confined Leonora wanders disconsolately, while the solemn sounds of the *Miserere* mingle with her laments. Manrico's voice is heard bidding her farewell. The Count appears and gloats over his victims and in a last attempt to save Manrico, Leonora offers herself as the price of his freedom. The Count agrees but while he is away Leonora sucks poison from her ring.

Manrico curses her, not knowing that she has promised herself to win his freedom (*Scene 2*). Only as she is dying does the truth dawn on him. The Count enters; furious at the deception he orders Manrico's immediate execution. Azucena, who has been in a stupor, rouses herself. The Count drags her to the window to witness the execution. "You have slain your brother!" she cries, "Mother, you are avenged!"

IL TROVATORE

MUSICAL HIGHLIGHTS

ACT I

SCENE 1

Ferrando's (Bass) Narration (with Chorus) "*All' erta!*"

SCENE 2

Soprano Aria — "*Tacea la notte placida*".

Trio and Stretto Soprano, Tenor and Baritone — "*Di geloso amor*".

ACT II

SCENE 1

Anvil Chorus.

Azucena's (Mezzosoprano) Narration — "*Stride le vampa*".

Duet Mezzosoprano and Tenor — "*Condotta ell'era in ceppi*".

SCENE 2

Baritone Aria — "*Il balen del suo sorriso*" (Tempest of the Heart).

ACT III

SCENE 1

Soldier's Chorus.

SCENE 2

Tenor Aria — "*Ah, si ben mio*" and Cabaletta — "*Di quella pira*".

ACT IV

SCENE 1

Soprano Aria — "*D'amor sull'ali rose*"; "*The Miserere Scene*" — Chorus, Soprano and Tenor.

Duet Soprano and Baritone — "*Qual voce*".

SCENE 2

Duet Mezzosoprano and Tenor "*Ai nostri monti*".
Final Trio, Soprano, Mezzosoprano, and Tenor.

RIGOLETTO

GIUSEPPE VERDI, 1813 - 1901

This opera was composed by the 38-year-old Verdi for the Fenice Theatre, Venice, where it had its première in March, 1851. It was the first of his long series of world successes and remains firmly in the repertory as one of the most popular of all operas. The libretto by Franco Maria Piave is an adaptation of Hugo's *Le Roi s'amuse*. To satisfy the strict Austrian censorship of the day, which would not tolerate a public representation of attempted regicide, the plot was transferred from the Court of France to the ducal palace at Mantua.

ACT I

After a short orchestral prelude the curtain rises on a ball in the ducal palace. The dissolute Duke of Mantua (Tenor) enters telling a courtier, Borsa, of his latest infatuation — this time with an unknown girl whom he has noticed in church every feast day. Just now, however, he is openly flirtatious with the Countess Ceprano (Mezzo-soprano) to the obvious annoyance of her husband. In the flippant aria *Questa o quella* ("This one or that one") the Duke declares that all women are fair game to him if only they are pretty. Ceprano (Bass) is taunted by Rigoletto, (Baritone), the Court jester, a hunchback, whose privileged gibes all the courtiers must endure. Cynically Rigoletto suggests to the Duke that the affair with the Countess would be furthered if the husband were made away with. Rigoletto wanders off and Marullo (Bass) amuses the others with the story that the buffoon has an innamorata! In this they see a chance of revenge on their tormentor. Now Monterone (Baritone) forces his way in to denounce the Duke, whose latest victim was the old man's daughter. He too is cruelly mocked by Rigoletto, but before being

hurried away the old man launches a father's curse on the hunchback, who is left cringing in superstitious fear.

ACT II

The double setting shows a street and, opening off it, the courtyard of Rigoletto's house wherein his treasured daughter Gilda (Soprano) is kept in strict seclusion. Rigoletto enters still brooding on Monterone's curse which haunts his mind. He is thinking of the daughter whom the courtiers think to be his mistress. A sinister figure emerges from the shadows. It is Sparafucile (Bass), a professional assassin. To Sparafucile's offer of services at a reasonable fee Rigoletto replies he has no present need of them. Alone, in the splendid aria *Pari siamo*, his jesting thrown aside, Rigoletto reflects bitterly on his deformity and the ignomy of his employment in the Duke's household. A very moving duet ensues between Gilda and himself in which memories of her dead mother are recalled. But the Duke has discovered Gilda's dwelling to which he now gains entry while Rigoletto is still in the house by bribing Giovanna (Mezzo-soprano), Gilda's duenna. He remains concealed in the courtyard. As he leaves, Rigoletto cautions Giovanna once more to guard his treasured Gilda well. When he is gone, the Duke emerges to tell Gilda that he is Gualtier Maldè, the supposed student whom she has often noticed in the church. A love duet follows, *E il sol dell' anima*. The Duke departs and in the coloratura aria *Caro nome* the young girl muses on her first love. Outside, the courtiers are gathering for the abduction that Ceprano has planned for his revenge. By means of a trick Rigoletto, blindfolded, is involved in the escape,

not suspecting its purpose. When he discovers the outrage he recalls Monterone's curse and the curtain falls to his anguished cry *La maledizione!*

ACT III

In the romance *Parmi veder le lagrime* the Duke laments the disappearance of Gilda. The courtiers, however, come to tell him of the trick played on Rigoletto and that Gilda is already in the palace. After the Duke's exit, in search of Gilda, Rigoletto appears distractedly searching for his daughter suspecting her to be with the Duke. His appeals to the courtiers are received with jeers until they realise the girl they have abducted is not his mistress but his daughter. When the distraught Gilda rushes in Rigoletto, suddenly invested with great dignity, inveighs against the baseness of these courtiers and furiously orders them from his presence, *Corteggiani vil razza dannata*. Intimidated by the change in Rigoletto, the courtiers go and Rigoletto hears from his daughter the story of her abduction. The Act concludes in a blazing duet, Rigoletto vowing vengeance on the Duke while Gilda, fearful for her lover, seeks to soften his anger.

ACT IV

Another double scene; Sparafucile's lonely inn and beside it the banks of the river Mincio. The Duke

has found another charmer, Maddalena (Mezzo-soprano), the sister of Sparafucile. Rigoletto has brought Gilda to witness for herself her lover's perfidy. Disguised this time as a soldier, the Duke is drinking and gambling. Debonairly he sings of the fickleness of women, *La donna è mobile*. This aria leads into the great quartet. At its conclusion Rigoletto, sending Gilda away, summons Sparafucile and hires him to murder the stranger in the inn, the body to be delivered to himself in a sack. A storm comes up. The Duke decides to remain overnight at the inn. Maddalena, who has fallen for the young man's charm, endeavours to dissuade her brother, suggesting that if he substituted another victim he might still claim the reward. Gilda has stolen back and overhearing the conversation of the pair, resolves to save her lover by exchanging her own life for his. Thus it is she who becomes the victim and it is her body, enclosed in the sack, that is delivered to her father. Rigoletto, his vengeance satisfied, as he thinks, is about to consign his burden to the river when the voice of the Duke reaches him in a reprise of *La donna è mobile*. He tears open the sack and the dying Gilda is revealed to him. With her last breath she begs forgiveness for her lover and herself. The opera ends with the crashing chords of the curse — *La maledizione* — which has exacted the full penalty.

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RUGGERO OROFINO (Tenor)

1. "Amor ti vieta di non amar" (FEDORA) *Giordano*
2. "Recitativo ed arioso" (PAGLIACCI) *Leoncavallo*
3. "Ch'ella mi creda libero e lontano"
(LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST) *Puccini*
4. "Celeste Aida" (AIDA) *Verdi*

RENATO BRUSON (Baritone)

1. "Oh dei verd' anni miei" (ERNANI) *Verdi*
2. "Nemico della Patria" (ANDREA CHENIER)
Giordano
3. "Prologo" (PAGLIACCI) *Leoncavallo*
4. "Vien Leonora" (LA FAVORITA) *Donizetti*

ANNA MACCIANTI (Soprano leggero)

1. "Oh quante volte" (CAPULETI e MONTECCHI)
Bellini
2. "Come per me sereno" (LA SONNAMBULA)
Bellini
3. "Rondo" (LUCIA di LAMMERMOOR)
Bellini. Donizetti

MARISA BALDAZZI (Soprano)

1. "Io son l'umile ancella"
(ADRIANA LECOUVREUR) *Cilea*
2. "Orrido campo" (BALLO in MASCHERA) *Verdi*
3. "Un bel di vedremo" (MADAMA BUTTERFLY)
Puccini
4. "Ave Maria" (OTHELLO) *Verdi*

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SECOND CONCERT

At the GAIETY THEATRE

Monday 30th May at 7.45 p.m.

MARIA BALDAZZI (Soprano)

1. "Cieli Azzurri" (AIDA) *Verdi*
2. "Voi Lo Sapete, o Mamma"
(CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA) *Mascagni*
3. "La Mamma Morta" (ANDREA CHENIER)
Giordano
4. "In quelle trine morbide" (MANON LESCAUT)
Puccini

RUGGERO OROFINO (Tenor)

1. "Un di all 'azzurro spazio" (ANDREA CHENIER)
Giordano
2. "O Paradiso dall 'onde uscito" (L'AFRICANA)
Meyerbeer
3. "Oh tu che in seno agli Angeli"
(LA FORZA DEL DESTINO) *Verdi*

ANNA MACCIANTI (Soprano Leggero)

1. "Sul fil d'un soffio etereo," (FALSTAFF) *Verdi*
2. "Una voce poco fa" (BARBIERE di SIVIGLIA)
Rossini
3. "Son vergin vezzosa" (PURITANI) *Bellini*

RENATO BRUSON (Baritone)

1. "Credo" (OTHELLO) *Verdi*
2. "Eri tu" (BALLO IN MASCHERA) *Verdi*
3. "Son Sessant'anni" (ANDREA CHENIER)
Giordano
4. "Santa Medaglia" (FAUST) *Gounod*

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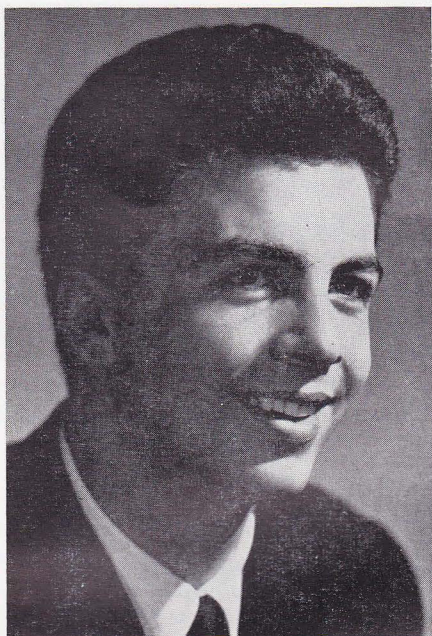


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- (2) CHOPIN — Sonata opera 35 in si bemolle min.
Grave — Doppio movimento
Scherzo
Marcia funebre
Finale
- (3) LISZT — Fantasia — Sonata
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(Concert Pianist) is son of the famous baritone Paolo Silveri. He was born in Rome 24 years ago. As a pupil of Dante Alderighi he received his diploma in piano-forte with the highest honours at the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia. At the same institution he studied both composition and orchestral conducting under Maestro Armando Renzi. In 1961 he won the first

award in the National Contest for pianists in Italy, while he was placed second in the International Concursus "G. B. Viotti" at Vercelli in 1962. Again in 1965 he was assigned the Almirante Prize for his performances of early and modern Italian music. Already young Silveri is intensely active both in Italy and abroad as a brilliant recitalist and as a solo pianist with orchestra.

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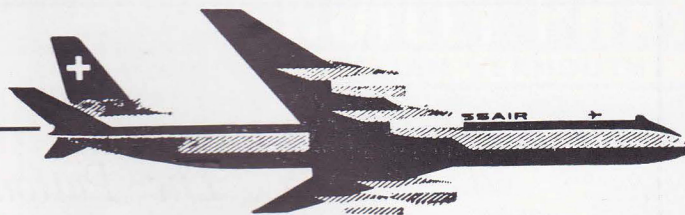
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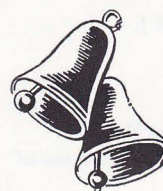
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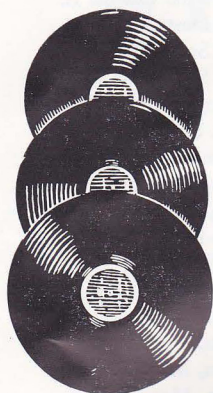
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JACQUES OFFENBACH, 1819-1880
TALES OF HOFFMAN

CAMILLE SAINT-SAENS, 1835-1921
SAMSON AND DELILAH

JULES MASSENET, 1842-1912
MANON

CLAUDE DEBUSSY, 1862-1918
PELLÉAS AND MÉLISANDE

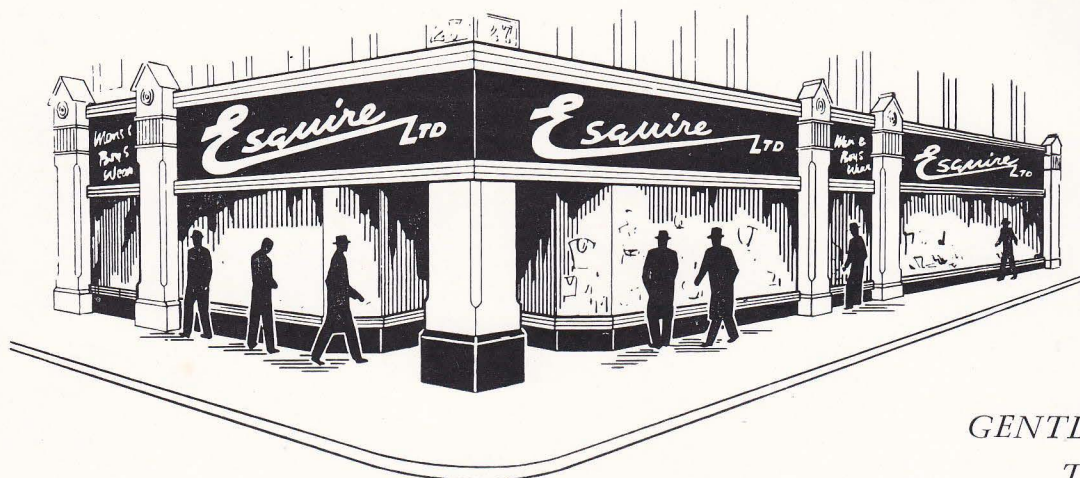
ENGLEBERT HUMPERDINCK, 1854-1921
HANSEL AND GRETEL

FRIEDRICH SMETANA, 1824-1884
THE BARTERED BRIDE

MICHAEL WILLIAM BALFE, 1808-1870
THE BOHEMIAN GIRL

LICINIO REFICE, 1884-1954
CECILIA

JOHANN STRAUSS, 1825-1899
DIE FLEDERMAUS



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